THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

East of Eden: A poststructuralist analysis of Croatia's identity in the context of EU accession

By

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Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

University of Edinburgh

2011

Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is entirely my own work, and that no part of it has been submitted for any other degree or qualification.

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Abstract

Since the early 1990s Croatia has defined membership of the European Union as one of its primary goals. However, the immediate post-war period and the difficult transition to democracy left Croatia in relative isolation from Western European states and its aim of joining the European Union seemed unattainable and distant. Croatia's involvement in the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and President Tuđman's politics proved to be great obstacles to its further democratisation and development. The parliamentary and presidential elections in the year 2000 and the defeat of Tuđman's party offered a unique opportunity to change the direction of Croatian politics and to move closer to achieving the goal of EU membership.

This thesis addresses changes in Croatia's identity and it does so through the analysis of discourses surrounding Croatia's cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and its changing attitudes towards the protection of minority rights during the year 2000. Both cases fall under the Copenhagen Criteria of Accession whose implementation was crucial for Croatia's moving closer towards EU membership. They are also closely linked to Croatia's identity and are rooted in the civilisational discourse that juxtaposes 'the West'/ EU and 'the East'/ the Balkans as both geographical and civilisational spaces. The two case studies are both concerned with questions of sovereignty, justice, victims of the Homeland War and the role of Serbia in Croatia's recent past and in its future. Serbia features as Croatia's radical other and is discursively constructed as an embodiment of the Balkans civilisation.

The study of cooperation with the ICTY and of discourses surrounding minority protection analyses the links between different civilisational spaces that Croatia navigates and their implications to the reconstruction of discourses central to Croatian identity. Despite different subject material both case studies reveal the centrality of the Serbian other for the Croatian identity and the need to redefine that relationship without undermining Croatia's identity as a Western country and attempts to differentiate itself from the Balkans.

Contents

1 Introduction: Conducting a poststructuralist study in the post-Tuđman Croatia

1.1 Introduction

At the beginning of the twenty-first century Croatia's political landscape started to change dramatically. After a long period of communist rule that started after the Second World War, independence and democratisation in the early 1990s came at great cost. The entire decade was spent in difficult political circumstances that challenged all aspects of the new sovereign state, such as the Homeland War, fought against Yugoslav forces, and the post-war period of recovery and democratisation that included cooperation with international institutions that posed further challenges to Croatia to adapt to the new circumstances. Membership of the European Union (EU) was put forward as a major foreign policy goal and in the mid-1990s there was an increase in cooperation between the two actors. However, in the period of the late 1990s Croatia was led into political isolation, never officially announced but whose effects were felt nevertheless. President Franjo Tuđman's[1] politics increasingly alienated the international community and Croatia's hopes of joining the European Union became more and more remote.

The start of the year 2000 was received with excitement and hope. The parliamentary and presidential elections that took place in January, after the death of Tuđman at the end of the previous year, signalling the possibility of a new direction that would lead the country towards membership in the European Union and away from the isolationist politics that characterised the previous ten-year period. The loss of Tuđman's party, the HDZ[2], to a coalition of six parties opened up possibilities for reform and a rearticulation of Croatia's national goals and values in accordance with contemporary European positions.

[1] Franjo Tuđman, President of Croatia between 30th May 1990 and 10th Dec 1999
[2] *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* (Croatian Democratic Union)

The Copenhagen Criteria of Accession, established by the European Union, required stability of democratic institutions, the rule of law, protection of minorities, ability to adhere to the *acquis communitaire* and a functioning market economy. An additional requirement was demanded of Croatia: to fully cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), established by the United Nations in 1993, with the purpose of trying individuals responsible for war crimes in the Yugoslav conflict. In the second half of the 1990s the level of cooperation was low and Croatia faced growing dissatisfaction from the international community. President Tuđman's approach to international cooperation was one of suspicion and resistance, which led the country to a stand-still. The election of a new leadership thus represented not just an opportunity for further democratisation but the beginning of a new era that would transform Croatia and require a profound change in its political identity.

On 4th October 2005, the European Union's Council of Ministers opened accession talks with Croatia after a period of rather strained relations between the two parties over the status of The Hague indictments. The launch of negotiations with the EU was immediately portrayed in the media as a historical event, something almost equal to the 1992 recognition of Croatia as an independent state.[3] It was with the elections of 2000 that the new era for Croatian politics really began and this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of the events that led to the opening of accession talks several years later.

The focus of this thesis is the question of Croatian national identity and how that has changed after the Parliamentary and Presidential elections of 2000 and why. In order to understand this occurrence the thesis will analyse the changes in the official government discourse regarding the questions of cooperation with the ICTY and the protection of minority rights in the immediate post-Tuđman period. After several years of resistance to full cooperation with the EU and the ICTY it is necessary to ask questions about the nature of the change that occurred. Why did it not happen earlier? Who was responsible for it? Is the European Union the most important agent that has the capacity to change norms and values in European

[3] D. Jović (2006), 'Croatia and the European Union: a long delayed journey', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, Vol.8, No.1 April, p.85

countries? What were the factors that led to such a profound change of attitude towards the European Union and the ICTY? Equally, questions arise concerning the issue of national minorities and their status in Croatia. What made the change in the discourse possible? Who was behind it? Were minorities actively involved in this process? What steps were taken in the process?

In order to answer these questions it is necessary to analyse not just the institutional changes that facilitated the processes in question, but to look deeper into the conceptual level that allows for a more complex understanding of the changes that happened in Croatia. With the aim of examining these changes within Croatia's political landscape in the light of the discursive shift in the construction of its identity, this thesis takes a broad poststructuralist approach with an emphasis on language and identity construction. Poststructuralism claims that all political decisions can only exist in discourse and stresses the inseparability of speech and acts. My point of departure is that discourse and identity are mutually constitutive and that their interplay is a necessary predisposition for transformation in a society. According to poststructuralist principles discourses of Croatian national identity are constantly reinterpreted and manifested in social and political practice.[4] This theoretical assumption requires a deeper examination of the process of identity construction and re-construction.

The study analyses the relationship between policy choices and political identity within the process of Croatia's transformation into a democratic, Western European country within the framework of the European Union enlargement. The argument presented in this study is that Croatia's particular understanding of what it means to be a Western European country had a great influence over certain policy choices that were made during the period of study. The analysis looks at the way the West, the European Union and the Balkans are constructed in the official Croatian discourse and the way these relationships are involved in shaping of the Croatian political identity. The study is conducted on two case studies: the basis of first is the question of cooperation with the ICTY and second is concerned with the problem of minority protection. The analysis chapters will demonstrate how each case study is

[4] A. J. Bellamy (2003), *The Formation of Croatian national identity*: *A centuries old dream?,* Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York, p.1

closely connected to the problem of Croatia's identity and how its reconstruction developed in several stages.

As will be discussed in the following chapter, many poststructuralist studies analyse identity in terms of a relationship between the subject of analysis and its 'other'. Although poststructuralist epistemology and ontology challenge the idea that identities are pre-given and fixed, a close reading of a number of studies reveals that in practice identities seem to be understood as rather unchanging. To be more specific, it is often assumed that the identity of the other is stable, in terms that the other has no potential to change and assume a different role. I argue that this assumption is problematic because it is locked in a dynamic that is difficult to explain within the given theoretical parameters of poststructuralist thinking that challenges conceptions of identity and relationships between actors as being static and defined. Thus we face a theoretical problem of an unchanging other that requires further discussion, backed up by empirical analysis.

In order to contribute to the resolution to the problem, this thesis takes a step further in this direction and seeks to answer how the relationship changes when an other undergoes an identity reconstruction towards a less 'radical other'. The thesis builds upon the existing literature on the process of identity construction and the process of othering, and seeks to fill the gap that concerns the static relationships between the subject of analysis and its others. The Croatian case challenges the assumption about the non-changing other and allows us to question its identity, as well as the relationship and the process of othering between the subject and the radical other. In doing so the study examines how discursive shifts occur when important political changes take place, and how that affects identity of the subject of analysis. Furthermore, the thesis explores how the change in the other influences the identity change within the subject of analysis, and what the implications of that development are. In this way the contribution of the thesis is about the Croatian case, as well as a discussion on an important theoretical concept and its development.

The two case studies, as well as the analysis of the Balkans as a civilizational and geographical space that precedes them, offer a fruitful avenue for researching this question, contributing both to the knowledge about Croatia, as well as to

poststructuralist understanding of identity and the process of othering that is central to it. The reconstruction of Croatian identity within a framework of international cooperation and development, and its relationship with the Serbian radical other, thus forms the core of the study. It demonstrates the complexity of relationships between a variety of political actors, both at home and in the international sphere.

Looking at the relationship between Croatia and the European Union, which serves as a broader context for the two case studies, will identify the factors central to this process and thus serve as a venue for applying poststructuralist principles to an empirical analysis. The encounter between the European Union and Croatia is not of two equal parties. The EU determines the political and financial measures that Croatia must respond to and adopt. The journey towards EU membership thus becomes a space for new discursive articulations on what is possible and what is desirable within the Croatian political setting.

I argue that the prospect of joining the EU has changed the nature of Croatian politics in three ways: it led to the defeat of the isolationist nationalism of the second half of the 1990s, it has helped to bridge the gap between various ideological and ethnic segments of Croatian society, and thirdly, Croatia's foreign policy has changed in terms of opening up to regional cooperation with Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. All of these things were unimaginable during the Tuđman era that promoted Croatia as a 'regional power': as being Western but unwilling to come to terms with contemporary interpretations of the definition of a Western European country.

However, it is important to clarify what the role of the European Union is in this study. Cooperation with the ICTY was closely related to the European Union, as well as the requirement for minority protection. The presence of the EU in the study remains at this level of a broader framework where Croatia has to respond to certain requirements from above. This allows us to search for the specifics within the two case studies of ICTY cooperation and minority protection, in terms of domestic politics and the way EU requirements were interpreted and discussed at the domestic level. In doing so, special attention to Western European identity is paid in this study, as it looks into the development of Croatian identity towards the European ideal. As

will be discussed later, in the official government discourse the EU was presented as a unified actor that had a defined identity and as such embodied what it meant to be Western European and democratic. The official government discourse neglected internal differences and tensions within the EU, and so constructed the relationship between Croatia and the EU in a specific way.

1.2 Methodology and analysis of text

The use of specific research methodology implies taking on certain ontological and epistemological positions about the nature of the social world and of knowledge. The poststructuralist ontology challenges positivist assumptions about the nature of the social world as being 'objective' and its idea that political research has the aim of capturing that objective world by operationalising concepts and measuring them in ways that mirror the methods employed in the area of natural sciences. In this respect poststructuralism is anti-positivistic and rejects the notion of the world which can be discovered and explained by employing methods such as gathering statistical data or relying on mechanisms of causality that explain social action.

Its methodology emphasizes the importance of language and interpretation of social action and as such relies on qualitative methods of research. The concept of qualitative methods refers to a variety of techniques that range from observation, interviews, and discourse analysis, all with the goal of focusing on the context within which social action takes place. Qualitative methods have been associated with interpretive epistemology that is concerned with the social construction and the changing nature of the social world. For that reason qualitative methods are good for capturing meaning, process and context.[5]

[5] F. Devine, 'Qualitative Methods' in D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds) (2002), *Theory and Methods in Political Science,* Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, Basingstoke

This proposed approach focuses on the discursive level which is closely tied to the identity of an actor undergoing change. The key assumption is that discourse and identity are mutually constitutive and this relationship is crucial for any kind of social and political development within a country.[6] During the period in which an actor's identity is being redefined or defined for the first time, a normative space is created that offers a possibility of taking in a new norm that is aligned with the developing identity. If norms really do have the power to induce change it is not enough to look at the structure and the institutions but to examine more closely the actual context: the actors, the setting and the discursive space. In this way identity becomes central to the study and in the context of this thesis we are looking at the specificities of Croatia as an actor and the way in which it has accepted the norms of cooperation with international institutions and of minority rights protection within the context of the EU accession conditions.

1.3 Contribution of the study

This study is important for several reasons. It adds to the body of literature on Croatian politics more generally, and more particularly, it discusses political events from a poststructuralist perspective that has not yet been employed in this area. In this way the study also contributes to the body of poststructuralist work that seeks to apply the theory to empirical case studies.

As discussed in the previous section, the main theoretical contribution of this study is the development of the idea that otherness does not have to be radical and that the subject of analysis is normally involved in a number of relationships with others of different degree. By taking this assumption as a starting point the study will demonstrate how a number of different others play different roles in the construction of Croatian identity. This aspect of the study will fill the gap in the existing literature

[6] L. Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, Routledge, London/New York, 2006

on identity construction and the process of othering, which is crucial for these type of studies.

The empirical contribution of the thesis concerns looking into a European country that has emerged from a more or less authoritarian rule and was looking for new connections and allegiances in the international community. Lessons and insight from the study of Croatian identity and transition can be used to apply the same approach to other case studies and look for possible similarities, and equally, for variations and peculiarities within them.

Finally, this study examines the Balkans as an area of historical animosities and analyses the discourses that shape it. In doing so it addresses the Western discourses about the Balkans that have heavily influenced Croatia and traces the variation of the discourse in the Croatian context. In this way the study contributes to the material on the Balkans from a Croatian perspective that has not been included in the academic debates.

Before introducing the Croatian historical and political context as a background for the case studies I will briefly engage with positivist and constructivist approaches and their epistemologies and argue for the need to include a greater amount of poststructuralist work to the existing body of literature in the studies of political identity and political change in general.

1.4 Epistemological and ontological questions in studying politics and the area of identity studies

The International Relations field has witnessed an increase in different theoretical approaches in the course of the last few decades. The dominant paradigms of positivist/empiricist schools that supported the view of social and political sciences as akin to natural sciences have been challenged by theoretical approaches that stress the constructed nature of the social world. Traditional International Relations approaches tend to stress the importance of material incentives in

producing the desired effect of change and look to sanctions and conditionality for means capable of delivering. Some theories allow for the possibility of changing beliefs and behaviour through means of socialisation, such as persuasion and communicative action. These processes are nevertheless dependent on the power structure inherent in the relationship between those who impose and those who accept the required conditions.[7]

Social constructivism developed as a response to the positivist conception of the world and it challenged some of its core assumptions. The name 'social constructivism' first appeared in 1989 in the book *World of Our Making* by Nicholas Onuf[8] but it was with an article by Alexander Wendt *Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics*[9] that the social constructivist approach gained popularity and started to significantly influence international relations theory. It has appeared as a critique of the orthodox IR theories such as neo-realism and neo-liberalism and as an alternative for explaining the nature of the international system.[10] Constructivism considers knowledge to be intersubjective, just like social reality is intersubjective. From this it follows that it is impossible to take a position outside of society, to be in that sense 'objective' in one's observations and deductions in respect to the observed phenomena. The one who observes always engages with the problem with a set of pre-defined concepts and ideas. The observer thus already has a specific 'knowledge' of reality which in turn shapes their understanding and the ability to analyse and explain. From this follows that all categories used by social scientists are social constructs.

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[7] See S. Smith, 'International theory and European integration', in M. Kelstrup, M.C. Williams (eds.) (2000), *International Relations Theory and the Politics of European Integration: Power, Security, Community*, Routledge, London; J. G. Ruggie, 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge' in P.J. Katzenstein, R.O. Koehane and S.D. Krasner (eds) (1999), *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, England; [7] R.G. Whitman (1998), *From Civilian Power to Superpower: The International Identity of the European Union*, Macmillan, London; A. Moravcsik (1993), 'Preferences and power in the European Community: A liberal intergovernmentalist approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol.31 No.4.

[8] N. Onuf (1989), *World of Our Making*, University of South Carolina Press

[9] A. Wendt (1992) 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: the Social Construction of Power Politics, *International Organisation* Vol. 46, pp.391-425

[10] J.G.Ruggie, 'What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge' in P.J. Katzenstein, R.O. Koehane and S.D. Krasner (eds) (1999), *Exploration and Contestation in the Study of World Politics*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA and London, England

This view is a radical move away from the positivist approaches that on the whole support the idea of an objective reality which can be measured, tested, presented with models and finally, predicted.[11] For constructivists and poststructuralists all knowledge is always and exclusively social. Their criticism of positivism mostly focuses on their attempt to reduce social reality to models and to arrange the objective findings through quantitative methods of analysis. Instead, social constructivism focuses on the peculiarities of every case and its complexities.[12] However, it is important to note that this rejection of a particular understanding of empiricism does not mean that poststructuralist scholars reject all empirical data about the world. Rather, it is a question of the way they understand facts and the way they construct empirical analysis around them. Poststructuralism rejects the notion that we can understand and study facts in a systematic way with the use of models that resembles the methods of natural sciences. Poststructuralism stresses context and meaning as crucial for understanding the world around us and suggests that all empirical reality cannot be separated from the meaning we attach to it. Hence, it stresses the importance of looking at all reality, both empirical and social, as two sides of the same coin that cannon exist without one another, and as a consequence cannot be analysed in isolation. This feature of poststructuralist thinking will be addressed in more detail in the following chapter, as part of the theoretical framework of the thesis.

There are a number of points that can be discussed regarding different theoretical approaches and identity, but I would like to focus on one that is relevant to my own study, and which will be central to my own poststructuralist argument,

[11] An example of how rationalist/empiricist approaches address the question of cooperation can be found in the literature on compliance. See F. Schimmelfenning, U. Sedelmeier (2004), 'Governance by conditionality: EU rule transfer to the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11:4, p.674; F. Schimmelfenning, S. Engert, H. Knobel, 'Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Volume 41. No. 3, pp.495-518; J. Kelley (2004), 'International Actors on the Domestic Scene: Membership Conditionality and Socialization by International Institutions', *International Organization* 58, pp.425-57 ; J. Kelley (2005), *Ethnic Politics in Europe: The Power of Norms and Incentives*, Oxford : Princeton University Press

[12] There are cases of constructivists who in their desire to 'bridge the gap' come very closely to the rationalist empiricism and as a result risk undermining some of the foundations of their own theory. For example, the constructivism of Alexander Wendt is a much debated issue. His critics accuse him of being too mainstream in his desire to stay close to rationalist ontology. His principle of a socially constructed reality is not compatible with his empiricist ideal of a 'real' social science that follows certain principles of testability and aims to imitate the natural sciences.

elaborated in the following chapter. This point concerns the role of identity in political research and its nature.

The most important element that distinguishes the social constructivist agenda from positivist perspectives is the stress on learning and change that takes into account features and actors that are discarded by positivist approaches.[13] These main features include the identity of actors, processes of identity and preference formation, and the role of ideas and norms that shape actors' preferences. Constructivists claim that there is no 'objective', external reality in the social world which dictates the behaviour of states and other actors on the international stage, but that the social and political world of today is a construction, a result of on-going practices that have shaped the identity of actors together with their interests. Constructivists do not dismiss the power of structure altogether but argue that identities and interests are shaped by the interaction between structure and units.

One of the central concepts to all branches of constructivism is identity. Empiricist schools do not provide an answer to the question of how states acquire identities and interests.[14] Changes of identity are not even an option for empiricists since the very concept does not fit into their ontological framework. They tend to assume that a state's identity is exogenously given and not dependent on historical, social and political context, and therefore is fixed, without an ability to change. According to this logic, identities shape state interest and these interests do not change, and thus in these approaches we always encounter struggle for power and material gain as determining principles of political action. Furthermore, it can be argued that identity is simply not a consideration for positivist approaches because it is not necessary for the explanation of occurrences that this epistemological position tends to analyse.

On the other hand, social constructivists acknowledge the importance of a state identity. Their reasoning rests on a fundamentally different principle, that identity is the result of intersubjective practices between actors, of the reading and interpreting of social acts, of interplay between the structure and its units.

[13] E. Adler (1997), 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, SAGE publications, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, Vol. 3 (3), p.322
[14] Ruggie, *What Makes the World,* op.cit.

Constructivists challenge positivist belief that identities are exogenously given and claim that they are results of interaction.[15] They claim that meanings are assigned to situations on the basis of institutionally defined roles. However, if situations are unprecedented in the actor's experience, the actor must construct the meaning of the given situation, by analogy or invention, and it must define its interest accordingly. In this way interests are not fixed and not necessarily material.

The understanding of ideas in IR is therefore crucial for a deeper awareness and analysis of identity. Positivist approaches tend to describe the role of ideas in narrow ways, keeping them on the level of serving instrumental purposes. Rationality is understood as a 'natural' concept, rather than constructed, where ideology is only employed for rational calculations of actors, and causal force of social facts is always subordinated to the materialist or rationalist view of the world. Constructivists seek to identify a whole range of ideational factors that shape the identity and preferences of actors, which include culture, ideology and norm driven behaviour. According to this position, the structure of the international society is socially constructed and therefore depends on these factors.[16] Ideas, when understood as collective knowledge, are seen as a driving force behind social action.[17] Constructivists are also interested in preferences but unlike positivists they understand preferences to be dependent on the identity of actors. These preferences are not necessarily defined as being material, but can be defined in non-material (or ideational) terms as well.[18]

In this way constructivism demonstrates a higher degree of theoretical development in this area of study. However, the problem with this kind of theorising and research is that it always keeps returning to the same debate and is centred around the issues such as the nature of rationality, state centric approaches, or the structure and agency debate, to name a few. I argue that looking for mechanisms and

[15] Wendt, *Anarchy*, op.cit.
[16] Ruggie, *What Makes the World*, op.cit.
[17] Adler, *Seizing the Middle ground*, op.cit.
[18] For a further discussion on constructivism and identity see P. J. Katzenstein (1996), *The culture of national security*, Columbia university Press, New York; R.L. Jepperson, A. Wendt and P.J Katzenstein, 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security' in Katzenstein (1996), *Culture*, op.cit.; M. Finnemore and K. Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change' in P. J. Katzenstein, R.O. Keohane and S.D. Krasner (1999), op.cit.

causal explanations limits enquiry to a tracing of processes based on observable and measurable features, without paying enough attention to subtleties in communication and discourses present within a given context. In these types of approaches, both positivist and constructivist, the inclination is to separate incentives and norms, to allocate them distinctive functions and to view them in the strict 'material vs. ideational' divide which relies on the notion of causality. It is a very one-dimensional outlook which in turn produces an unsatisfactory account of change within the political sphere.

I argue that both positivist and constructivist approaches offer a valuable but limited explanation and understanding of such complex processes because of their ambition to provide overall, universally valid explanations. Their epistemological positions prevent them from placing more focus on the actors and the complexity of their interaction. On the other hand, I stress the importance of being sensitive to the context and specificity of a process, rather than looking at a series of causal mechanisms in order to produce a matter-of-fact explanation. A complete, wide-ranging analysis of a process of change demands looking into several elements.

This thesis employs a poststructuralist approach to studying Croatia and the reconstruction of its political identity and in doing so if offers an alternative reading of political events that took place. The thesis is informed by the previous studies conducted from a rationalist and constructivist frameworks and has drawn valuable insight from them, such as the relevance of understanding the processes of international cooperation, the role of individual actors who have the power to influence political events, and a number of points about identity construction. Its contribution, however, is to be found within the growing number of poststructuralist studies that apply theoretical insight to empirical studies. The following chapter will start by discussing poststructuralism in general terms, and proceed to focus on a specific field that addresses politics and identity and their complex relationship of mutual constituitivness.

The following section looks at Croatia's historical and political context that will offer a background for a better understanding of the case studies analysed later on. The overview will include Croatian circumstances during the Yugoslav period

and several events leading to its independence, the war, and the Tuđmanist discourses on statehood and Europe. Another purpose of the historical overviews is to highlight a number of emerging discourses that proved to be important for the analysis of events that form the focus of this thesis. The discussion will thus focus both on historical facts and the way they were interpreted in the subsequent periods, and thus shaped political debate in a particular way.

1.5 Croatia and its place in Europe: between the East and West

One of the central aspects of this study is the problem of where Croatia belongs on the map of Europe. The events that took place in the year 2000 witness of a confusing and challenging period where difficult decisions had to be made and ways of moving towards European Union membership were sought. Controversial questions were raised and often the answers were weak, unconvincing and even contradictory. At the heart of it all stood the question that politicians struggled to answer: how can we leave the Balkans and move closer to the Western world?

The end of Yugoslavia and the Croatian proclamation of independence

In the late 1960s Croatia and Slovenia started opposing the politics of centralisation and territorial redistribution of economic resources in Yugoslavia. In Croatia the movement acquired supporters from various backgrounds and subsequently turned into a political as well as a cultural movement.[19] The first revival of Croatian national consciousness began among intellectuals with the focus on language and cultural questions. The important centre of the movement was *Matica Hrvatska*, a publishing house that argued against the Croatian language being

[19] The movement was referred to as *Hrvatsko proljeće* (Croatian Spring). S. Malešević (2002), *Ideology, legitimacy and the new state: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia*', Frank Cass, London and Portland, p. 223

downgraded to a dialect of the so-called Serbo-Croatian and portrayed the Serbs as ruthless and backward, brutally oppressing the more advanced Croats.[20] The movement ended with police action and the threat of army intervention. The leaders were dismissed and many of those involved were imprisoned, while a number of leaders of the Croatian League of Communists were removed from office. The period that followed saw the repression of every nationalist and liberal sentiment in Croatia which was from then on referred to as the 'silent republic'. Its communist leadership avoided all confrontation with the authorities for the next 20 years and all who supported the opposition movement were seen as dangerous nationalists and were persecuted, jailed or forced to emigrate.[21]

The political stillness in Croatia ended in 1989 when new political parties were established. The question of nationalism was something that featured heavily in all of the parties, albeit in different ways regarding their understanding about the position Croatia should have within the Yugoslav federation.[22] In June 1989 Franjo Tuđman founded the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* – HDZ) that became the strongest contender at the forthcoming elections. Tuđman was an ex-general in the Partisan army in the Second World War and a reformed nationalist whose call was to 'national reconciliation' between all of the levels of Croatian society, especially between the left and the right. Another feature of Tuđman's programme was decreasing the power of Serbs in favour of ethnic Croatians.[23] In eastern Slavonia a section of the Serb elite started to organise its own party under the name Serbian Democratic Party (SDS)[24] that argued in favour of establishing autonomy of the Serbian districts of Croatia. They were supported by Slobodan Milošević and other Serb-nationalist politicians in Belgrade.

[20] W. Bartlett (2002), *Croatia: Between Europe and the Balkans*. Routledge, London ; A .J. Bellamy (2003), *The Formation of Croatian Nation Identity: A centuries-old dream?*, Manchester University Press, Manchester and New York.
[21] S. Malešević (2002), *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia*, Frank Cass, London and Portland, p.224
[22] W. Bartlett, op. cit. p.33
[23] W. Bartlett, op. cit. p.34
[24] *Srpska demokratska stranka*

The final break-up of the Yugoslav Communist Party happened at the 14th Party congress in Belgrade on 23 January 1990.[25] At the centre of the debate were two competing views on the future of Yugoslavia that clashed openly. Serbian communists wanted the return of the centralised party structure while the Slovenian Communists, supported by Croats, argued for a loose association of republican parties. However, after all the amendments proposed had been overruled by majority votes, the Slovenian and Croatian delegations walked out and started preparing for elections.[26]

In Croatia's first democratic elections on 22 April 1990 the HDZ defeated the Communist Party. The first meeting of the new Croatian Parliament was held in May 1990 when amendments to the republic's constitution were introduced and the word 'socialist' was dropped from the name. In December 1990 a new constitution was introduced and declared Croatia to be the homeland of the Croatian nation. The new Government introduced discriminatory policies against the Serbian population and defined the new state as belonging to the ethnic Croats. In eastern Slavonia where the Serbian population had a provisional majority, many did not recognise the new government and started establishing their own institutions.

The Croatian Constitution proclaimed the republic's sovereignty and the right to secede from the Yugoslav federation. It also established a bicameral parliament with a lower house-the House of Representatives and an upper house-the House of Counties. A new Citizenship Law was passed that allowed ethnic Croats who lived

[25] The following titles represent a selection of a variety of approaches to the topic of disintegration of Yugoslavia: B. Denitch (1994), *Ethnic Nationalism: The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia,* University of Minessota Press, Minneapolis, MN, L. J. Cohen (1993), *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration And Balkan Politics,* Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado; I. Banac (2001), *Raspad Jugoslavije: eseji o nacionalizmu i nacionalnim sukobima*, Durieux, Zagreb; S. L. Woodward (1995), *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War,* Brookings Institution Press, Washington DC ; S. P. Ramet (1996), *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War,* Westview Press, Boulder Colorado; D. Jović (2003), *Jugoslavija: država koja je odumrla,* Prometej, Zagreb; D. Jović (2001), 'The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A critical review of Explanatory Approaches' in *European Journal of Social Theory,* Vol. 4 No.1, Sage Publications; London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi; D. Ljubišić (2003), *A Politics of Sorrow: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, I. Goldstein (1999), *Croatia: A History*, Hurst & Company, London , M. Glenny (2000), *The Balkans 1804-1999,* Granta Books, London; S. Malešević (2002), *Ideology, legitimacy and the new state: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia*', Frank Cass, London and Portland, p. 223

[26] G. Uzelac (2006), *The Development of the Croatian Nation: an Historical and Sociological Analysis*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter, p. 188

abroad the right to apply for citizenship and to vote in elections without being residents, but at the same time non-ethnic Croats had to prove their right for citizenship by presenting evidence of their residence in Croatia for the period of at least five years and proficiency in the Croatian language.[27] The new Constitution caused alarm among the Serb population because it appeared to downgrade their status as citizens from 'constitutional nation' to 'national minority'.[28] The political parties did not secure an accord between the Serbs and Croats in this process of gaining independence and the added fuel to the fire was the anti-Croatian propaganda of the Belgrade press that was widely read by the Serbian population in Croatia.

The 'Homeland War'

On 18 May 1991 Croatia held a referendum for independence. The result was an 84 percent turnout and 93 percent in favour. However, 600,000 Serbs in Croatia boycotted the vote. A month later, independence was declared with the 'Proclamation of the Sovereign and Independent Republic of Croatia'. On 15 January 1992 Croatia was recognised by the international community, together with Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Macedonia.[29]

Croatia had a big Serbian minority population in some parts of eastern Slavonia, and Milošević's policy was to incorporate these areas into a new 'Greater Serbian state'. The crisis rapidly grew and at the end of August 1991 the JNA – Yugoslav National Army[30] expelled the Croatian population in the region of Baranja.

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[27] W. Bartlett, op. cit. p.36

[28] D. Jović (2003), *Jugoslavija: država koja je odumrla, Prometej, Zagreb*
The implications of this will be discussed in detail in chapter six on minority protection. The Yugoslav federation consisted of five 'constitutive nations' (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Montenegrins) and two 'nationalities' (Albanians in Kosovo and the population of Vojvodina – both autonomous regions within the Republic of Serbia). The Yugoslav Constitution treated all nations as equal but there was the recognition that the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes had a greater influence of the country's politics. A detailed analysis of the relations between Yugoslav nations and nationalities can be found in D. Jović (2001), 'Fear of becoming *minority* as a motivator of conflict in the former Yugoslavia', *Balkanologie,* Vol. 5, no. 1-2

[29] A.J. Bellamy, op. cit. p.3

[30] Yugoslav National Army – *Jugoslavenska narodna armija*

In September a major offensive was launched by the JNA in eastern Slavonia and in Dalmatia. This officially marked the beginning of the Homeland War. The most violent battle of the war was fought in Vukovar, a town in eastern Slavonia. It was besieged for two months, completely destroyed and finally conquered by the JNA. Most civilians had fled by that time but about 300 people were killed in its local hospital. The fall of Vukovar thus became one of the major symbols of the Homeland War.[31]

The European Union managed to pressure the warring parties into signing an agreement in The Hague to end the war, according to which Croatia would be recognised and the JNA would withdraw from its territory, while the breakaway regions of Krajina and Slavonia would be demilitarised and patrolled by UN peacekeepers. UN Security Council Resolution 743 of 21 February 1992 authorised the deployment of UNPROFOR in the region with 15,000 peacekeepers.[32] The JNA withdrew but Serbian militias continued to operate in the area and prevented the return of Croatian refugees which made the UN and EU involvement controversial and highly criticised in the following years.

The period of 1992-1994 was one of relative peace. By 1995 the Croatian Army was significantly increased in strength and capability and launched a series of offensives to regain territories lost to rebel Serb forces. Operation Flash (*Operacija Bljesak)* was launched in May 1995 and removed Serb forces from the Krajina region in western Slavonia. One of the results of the operation was an estimate of 30,000 displaced Serbian civilians. The largest of the offensives, Operation Storm (*Operacija Oluja*), began on 4th August 1995 and in a few days the Croatian forces took almost all of the territory previously occupied. In 1997 this transition of authority over the occupied territories was carefully completed.[33]

The Homeland War and its aftermath were spent in rebuilding of the country and attempts to improve relations with the international community. The process was difficult and progressed slowly. Dissatisfaction grew among the population and

[31] W. Bartlett, op. cit. p.40
[32] The United Nations, www.un.org, last accessed in May 2009
[33] A.J. Bellamy, *Formation of Croatian National Identity*, op. cit. p.4; I. Goldstein, *Croatia*, op. cit. pp. 248-256

public criticism of Tuđman and his politics was becoming more vocal. It was with his death in December 1999 that the period ended and provided an opportunity for a radical change in Croatian politics.

The Homeland War has been a defining feature of the modern Croatian state. It has been defined a war for liberation and a final step in achieving long desired freedom from foreign rule and sovereignty. The theme of fighting for freedom was coupled with the interpretation of events that took place during the Yugoslav period. These discourses gained a status that was difficult to challenge and the period studied in this thesis is when these things are starting to be critically examined. Operations Flash and Storm turned out to be highly controversial and a reason for a number of trials in The Hague. Discourses of justice and the need to reveal the truth about the war dominated the political discussion in the year 2000, and continued afterwards. The subsequent analysis will refer to these events and look for the way these discourses that were crucial for the construction of Croatian identity were defended, reconstructed, as well as openly challenged in the new political context.

The Tuđmanist discourse

The following section will analyse the Tuđmanist discourse that defined the entire period of the 1990s and determined the way political questions were posed in the new government discourse in the early post-election period in 2000. The analysed Tuđmanist discourse revolves around a number of nodal points that continued to structure the political discourse of the following period, although they required a reconstruction of their meaning to become more in line with the European requirements. The following discussion will thus provide an opportunity to compare the two and to reveal the development of political discourse over a short period of time.

This analysis is based on my own reading of Tuđman, as well as a number of secondary sources that dealt with the same topic. The primary purpose of this

overview is to draw relevant discourses from Tuđman's rhetoric that were still present in the following period, and underpinned many political debates of the time. This analysis will demonstrate that there are very strong links between these two time periods and that it is important to acknowledge this discursive interconnectedness in order to more clearly understand the subject matter of the thesis. The following discussion addresses discourses of sovereignty, freedom, justice and what constituted Croatian identity over a period of time.

During the period of the 1990s Croatian national identity was shaped primarily through the discourse of the historical statehood that proposed that Croatia held continuous statehood since the medieval times and had preserved its statehood through many guises.[34] The discourse on the historical statehood starts with the articulation of the 'centuries-old' dream, placed in the medieval times. A continual line of political independence was traced, between the tenth century when Tomislav assumed the title of King of Croatia and Dalmatia, and the Formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1918. The central signifier in the discourse was sovereignty and its meaning was reinterpreted and confirmed throughout the history.

The continuity of statehood was understood as the basis of 'Croatianess', the main source of the people's national identity. The discourse of continual statehood challenged the legitimacy of Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918) and the Socialist Federalist Republic of Yugoslavia (1945) because the Croatian Parliament had not freely chosen to enter into the union.[35] The stress on voluntary action that justifies modifications to the meaning of sovereignty will be encountered once again in relation to the cooperation with The Hague tribunal, which demonstrates a direct connection with Tuđman's discourse on sovereignty. With the elections of 1990 Croatia again introduced the notion of statehood into the mainstream political discourse of the new regime. By invoking the Croatian right to an independent state

[34] A. Bellamy, chapter 3: 'The Croatian historical statehood narrative' in *Formation of Croatian National Identity,* op. cit.; I. Banac (1992), 'Historiography of the countries of Eastern Europe: Yugoslavia', *American Historical Review,* vol.97, No.4; I. Banac (1996), 'Introduction to special issue on the concepts of nationhood in early modern Eastern Europe', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies,* Vol. 10, No. 3-4; G. Uzelac, *Development of the Croatian Nation*, op. cit. p.192

[35] Like it did in 1102 with Hungary, and later on with Austria in 1526. For a detailed historical account see I. Goldstein (1999), *Croatia: A History*, op. cit.; also A. J. Bellamy, op. cit. p.57

as the central political aim of society, the new regime managed to use this tradition in order to present itself as being responsible for the realisation of this '900-year old dream'.[36]

Croatia saw itself as developing along the lines of Western liberal democracy and was keen to show its progress. However, despite the regime's attempts to present Croatia as a case where the rule of law has been achieved, many argued that that was very far from the truth and that the regime's source of legitimacy was rooted elsewhere – in the charismatic authority of the leader.[37] Tuđman's charisma and authority was a big part of the 1990 campaign. Many compared him to Tito: a prophetic leader who would fulfil the 1,000 year old dream of establishing an independent Croatian state. It was generally accepted that he accomplished something close to a miracle: under his leadership, poorly armed Croats managed to defend themselves against 'the fourth military force in Europe'.[38] This feature of Croatian victory over Yugoslavia that was made possible by Tuđman, was another central element in Croatian identity construction. It led to the construction of the Serbian other in negative terms, as aggressor, backward and an inherent enemy of Croatia. This construction will prove to be central for the analysis of Croatian identity later on.

The linking of the HDZ with Croatia was a recurrent theme in the party's rhetoric, like in the following example: 'This election has shown that all enemies of the HDZ are also the enemies of the sovereign Croatian state.'[39] In the media the relationship between Tuđman and the Croatian people was depicted as being one: 'In that expression of togetherness it became clear that Tuđman was not making decisions alone, but it was the history and people in Tuđman; that one man is not an accident of free will but of collective identification and a thousand –year-old ambition with which an individual Tuđman is not an individual Tuđman any more but Croatian destiny. In that way his decisions are the decisions of the Croatian people.'[40] The HDZ members openly stated this relationship as not only natural but

[36] S. Malešević, *Ideology,* op. cit. p. 225
[37] S. Malešević, *Ideology,* op. cit. p.229
[38] F. Tuđman as quoted in Malešević, *Ideology,* op. cit. p.230. Also see Uzelac, *Development,* op. cit.
[39] *Feral Tribune*, 21 April 1997, my translation
[40] *Feral Tribune,* 4 September 1995, my translation

necessary for the preservation of the Croatian state, which is evident in the following text: 'If this Croatia, established by the HDZ, this Tuđman's Croatia would fall through, I am sure that would be the end of Croatian people'.[41] Or again: 'In my opinion one can put a symbol of equality between new Croatia and Tuđman.'[42]

The linkage between party, president and the state was the cornerstone of the HDZ project in the 1990s.[43] To spread the HDZ vision of a unified and independent Croatia, Tuđman established a political movement in which he embodied the Croatian nation and was the personification of Croatian unity. The thread that connected them all was the desire to have a Croatian state. He saw himself as necessary and needed to bridge the rifts between all different levels of Croatian society and the programme of the so-called 'national reconciliation' was committed to bringing back political émigrés and their descendants. In this way Tuđman was to be 'the president of all Croats.'[44] In this sense the HDZ looked more like a national movement than a regular political party. In Tuđman's opinion that was a desirable status, and is best demonstrated in the following quote: 'Unlike all the political parties before, based on neither class or ideological-political differences, the HDZ appeared as a nation-wide democratic party focused on bringing together all nation-building forces in all layers and classes of society, from the radical right through the moderate position to the revolutionary left.'[45]

Another strategy for the unification of Croats was a clear definition of the Serbian 'other'. Tuđman argued that their 'otherness' was based on three levels: cultural, historical, and geographical.[46] He argued that Croats had culture while Serbs did not, that Croatia's culture was Western while Serbia belonged to the East, 'like Turks and Albanians that belong to the Byzantine culture.'[47] Tuđman claimed that in historical terms, it was the foreign powers that brought Serbia and Croatia together in 1918, two nations that up to that point had a different national consciousness, cultural

[41] *Feral Tribune*, 20 March 1995, my translation
[42] *Feral Tribune*, 10 April 1995, my translation
[43] Bellamy, *Formation of Croatian National Identity*, op. cit. p.66
[44] *Feral Tribune*, 17 November 1997, my translation
[45] Speech by F. Tuđman on the 7th anniversary of the first convention of the HDZ, 23 February 1997, my translation
[46] Bellamy, *Formation*, op. cit. p.68
[47] L. J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds: Yugoslavia's Disintegration and Balkan Politics in Transition*, Oxford: Westview, 1995, p.211

make-up and 'general historical, state-political and religious tradition'.[48] He argued that Croatia and Serbia were geopolitically and culturally separate: Croatia being at the heart of Europe, both geographically and politically, while Serbia was on the Balkans. Furthermore, Tuđman stressed that the difference between the two were not simply differences between two countries but between two civilisations.[49] This is one of the central discourses in this study and shall be examined in detail in chapter four in terms of the civilisational discourse of 'the West' versus 'the East'. Croats were the civilised entity versus the uncivilised, Balkan Serbia, a backward country that had impeded Croatia's progress in the past. Croatia was perceived as being Western and thus different from/opposed to the Serbs which were in turn Eastern, backward, primitive, Balkan people. It is a matter of differences between civilisations and not only nations. In order to protect Croatia from the East, Tuđman desired a state for ethnic Croats exclusively.

Croatia and the European Union in the 1990s

The following section looks at developments during the 1990s that concerned Croatia's relations with the European Union. Like in the previous sections the aim is to identify a number of relevant events and how they were discursively constructed in the official discourse. This will allow us to more clearly see the connections between them and the post-Tuđman discourses and how they eventually underwent reconstruction. This section introduces identity, the question of national minorities and the civilizational discourse that are central for the analysis in this thesis.

In the early 1990s the official Croatian Discourse insisted that Croatia was a Western European country and it expected the European Union to help it on the way to recovery and progress. However, in the years after the war, Tuđman lost faith in Europe because his perceptions of Croatia and ideas about where it was supposed to

[48] Bellamy, *Formation,* op. cit. p. 68
[49] Bellamy, *Formation,* op. cit. p.69

be heading were in sharp contrast with the EU agenda. The European rejection of Croatia and the demands imposed were understood as an injustice and a lack of support. Tuđman accused the EU of being vindictive towards Croatia because of the role it played in the disintegration of Yugoslavia and blamed the EU for not wanting to face the truth of having an 'untidy area' it was not capable of managing during the wars of the early 1990s.

Another point that Tuđman liked to stress was the EU's failure in Bosnia and Herzegovina due to Croatia's close links with the USA. It was because of that, Tuđman claimed, that the American concept prevailed, formulated in the Dayton Peace Accords.[50] In this element he saw another reason for the EU to be against Croatia, embodied in the 'Western Balkans' approach. When the EU pointed to the eviction of Ethnic Serbs in 1995 after the operation Storm and heavily criticised Croatia for it, Tuđman angrily replied: 'Some European states dare to teach us lessons on how to treat minorities. They have forgotten that a democratic France, for example, does not even recognise the existence of minorities on its soil. Or, they urge us that we must return all Serbs who fled from Croatia during the war, but they forget that they could not solve problems like that between Czech Republic and Germany.'[51] This statement demonstrates his understanding of internal differences in the European Union with regard to minority rights and a number of problems that exist within that domain.

In 1997 the EU introduced the Regional Approach policy for the countries of the Western Balkans. The very concept of the 'Western Balkans' had an ugly ring in Croatia and suggested that Croatia was a Balkan country instead of a European one. The Balkans linked Croatia to Serbia, Bosnia, and Albania, among others, all seen as undeveloped and backward societies. Being placed in the Western Balkans group rather than with the Central European countries was seen as a major step back and even an insult. Tuđman responded in anger, claiming that the use of the concept suggested European hostility towards Croatia and a threat to Croatian sovereignty.[52]

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[50] D. Jović (2006), 'Croatia and the European Union: a long delayed journey', *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans,* Vol. 8, no. 1, op. cit. p.90

[51] An interview with editors-in-chiefs of the Croatian media, *Feral tribune,* 22 October 1996, Zagreb, my translation

[52] Jović, Ibid. p.89

Over time Tuđman's rhetoric became more and more like the one he used to employ against Belgrade. Croatia was a 'small nation', unimportant in international politics, under the mercy of great powers. The European Union, just like Yugoslavia before that, was called an 'artificial creation', a project based on idealistic visions that are unrealistic.[53] Europe and Brussels became the other in the new rhetoric.

Fighting the mighty neighbour again was to become a new myth on which his nationalism would feed and around which he tried to gather followers. The rhetoric of self-sufficiency changed the target (Brussels instead of Belgrade) but not fundamentally the content. Internal and external enemies remained a constant threat to Croatian stability and worked to undermine its sovereignty. Tuđman's ideas could not survive the modern European democracy. The failure to change and reinvent the discourse on the Croatian nation and statehood became a very obvious drawback.

This overview has focused on relevant events and discourses that are needed for a deeper understanding of events that are the focus in this thesis. It is important to demonstrate the links between the domestic context and political choices being made, especially when the analysis addresses complex periods of transition and profound change. Discussing Croatia's position in Yugoslavia and a development of a number of issues that occupied the political discourse of the time reveals a link with a number of political discourses encountered in the analysis. The same applies to the Homeland War and its role in the Croatian identity construction, underpinned by the hegemonic discourse of Tuđman and his followers. The new government was faced with the remains of the legacy of the 1990s and a country struggling to reconcile the demands of the international community and its own sense of identity. The outlined events and discourses will aid the analysis of changing Croatian identity within the area of cooperation and minority protection, by placing them within a wider discursive field.

[53] Jović, op. cit. p.91

1.6 Research questions and thesis structure

This thesis applies the poststructuralist framework in order to analyse the reconstruction of Croatian identity in the post-Tuđman period, within the wider framework of European Union enlargement initiatives. In doing so it analyses discursive changes on cooperation with the ICTY and minority rights protection. The study starts with the hypothesis that political identity and policy choices are mutually constitutive and that this relationship is crucial for understanding political change in a given context. The main questions concern the reconstruction of Croatian identity and how that came about, which actors were involved in the process, and what the outcome was. This thesis attempts to answer these questions in regard to the Croatian case but also seeks to go beyond them and address some theoretical questions regarding the process of identity construction and the process of othering. More specifically, the following research questions are explored in the thesis:

1. How was Croatian identity discursively reconstructed in the immediate post-Tuđman period?
2. What is the position of the Serbian other and can it be changed?
3. What are the implications for the identity of Croatia if the Serbian radical other changes into a non-radical other?

Therefore, the main contribution of this thesis is twofold. First, it contributes to the understanding of the Croatian case in terms of empirical work conducted from a poststructuralist perspective. And second, it contributes to the development of theory regarding the process of othering, the relationship between the subject of analysis and its others and the changes within the other's identity.

These questions are explored over seven chapters. Chapter 2 addresses poststructuralist approaches and discusses the basic tenets of its ontology and epistemology. It discusses several crucial concepts for poststructuralist analysis and the way they will be used in the data analysis chapters. Furthermore, it discusses a body of poststructuralist work that addresses the question of identity and the relationship between the subject and its other. This section will provide a theoretical

framework for the analysis of data in subsequent chapters and will point to existing problems in the literature and suggest ways to bridge this gap.

Chapter 3 elaborates on methodology used in the study and the way it will feature in the analysis of data. The process of analysis is outlined step by step and particularities of the study are placed within the methodological context. Links between the methodology and poststructuralist theory are highlighted, as well as the way they will be employed in the analysis of data.

Chapter 4 contains an overview of events and of the new political agenda in the immediate post-Tuđman period, as well as the debates on the Constitution, the range of presidential power and the nature of democracy. It proceeds to analyse the civilisational discourse of the West versus the Balkans that has a function of a basic discourse in the study, which organises other discourses around itself. This is followed by an account of the Serbian radical other and the meaning of the Balkans. It addresses the Balkans as a geographical and civilisational space and Serbia as an extension of the Balkans near and within Croatia. The last section of the chapter analyses Croatia's role in the region as working 'for Europe', and its role in democratising the neighbouring countries.

The material discussed in this chapter is crucial for the study of cooperation with The Hague and of the question of minorities. It sets up the scene for the following analysis by rooting the two case studies in the civilisational discourse that adds an extra dimension to the study by relating it to the wider context of Croatian historical and contemporary debates.

Chapter 5 contains an analysis of discourses surrounding cooperation with the ICTY. It looks at the rearticulation of the concept of sovereignty that is crucial for the discourse of Croatian historical statehood. It carries on addressing the othering of Croatia's own past and of separating the legitimate defenders of the war and war criminals. The last step in the process concerns the change from constructing Serbia as a threat to the existence of the sovereign Croatian state towards the reconstruction of danger that is interpreted as remaining in the Balkans.

Chapter 6 studies the discourses around the protection of minority rights. The analysis is primarily concerned with the Serbian minority that is constructed as an

extension of the Balkans within Croatia. The analysis revolves around the concept of the radical other and the gradual change towards a less threatening other that becomes acceptable to Croatia and does not threaten its Western democratic identity.

Chapters 5 and 6 address different issues but share important links between them. The civilisational discourse is present in both cases and provides guidance for a deeper understanding of the events. Also, it brings to the surface hidden meanings present in both case studies and their close connections. The nature of the Serbian radical other, the changing subject position of 'victims' of the war and 'aggressors' become evident through the reading of the civilisational discourse and shed more light on the questions of cooperation and minority protection.

Chapter 7 concludes the study with a discussion of the previous analysis and offers critical insight into some methodological and theoretical implications that emerged from the analysis. The chapter concludes with possibilities for future research and the contribution of the study to the existing literature on Croatia, as well as its contributions to the theory and methodology.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the theoretical foundations of poststructuralism and seeks to highlight key concepts that will subsequently be employed to analyse identity change in the context of my Croatian case study. I will address key ontological points that underpin this theoretical approach and introduce a set of concepts that are necessary for the study of changing Croatian identity in a new political setting. The second part of the chapter discusses several studies that belong to the Copenhagen School that are essential for my approach to studying political identity. The case studies that are discussed contribute to the existing application of poststructuralism to empirical analysis, as well as to the study of identity in more general terms. These studies are relevant for this thesis because they provide examples of how poststructuralist analysis can be conducted, as well as allow for further discussion and development of several theoretical points they bring up.

It is important to demonstrate not only the benefits to be found in using a poststructuralist approach rather than alternative frameworks, but also to attempt to broaden the use of poststructuralist approaches and discourse analysis in new case studies. Looking at the foundations of poststructuralist thought and its application in the Copenhagen School will allow me to develop conceptual tools that are needed for the study of Croatia and for developing further some theoretical insights about identity.

2.2 Conceptual framework

Poststructuralism is not a unitary school of thought and serves as an umbrella term for a number of thinkers who addressed structuralism from different perspectives. They include Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as some of the most prominent thinkers who have influenced its theoretical developments in the last decades. The principles of these and other scholars with whose work I have engaged with is that they all hold anti-positivist positions and challenge the effects of the Enlightenment, which is evident in their particular understanding of rationality and positivism.[1] Poststructuralism has further developed in the last two decades and found its way into contemporary social science, developing its basic ideas along the way and broadening the scope of the approach in terms of the application and types of analysis. Despite internal differences all poststructuralist scholars reject the distinction between the material and the ideational, the discursive and non-discursive, and the behavioural and linguistic in social practice, and maintain that 'objects' gain meaning in discourse while every discursive structure has a material character.[2] They argue that all objects are constituted in discourse when they acquire meaning, and conclude that linguistic and behavioural practices are ontologically the same. Much of the criticism aimed at poststructuralist thought focuses on this question of discourse that rationalist-empiricist scholars understand as being separated from objective reality. But such claims are misleading and demonstrate a lack of understanding what poststructuralism is and what its ontological and epistemological bases are. Poststructuralist scholars do not reject the notion that things exist 'out there', but claim that in order to make sense of these objects there must be a context, a way for us to understand what they are – or in other words, meaning is always attached to them.

The concept of discourse has a rich history behind its deployment and meaning in social sciences. For example, it can refer to a linguistic level only and

[1] J. Der Derian and M. Shapiro (eds), *International-Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, Free Press, 1989.
[2] E. Laclau and C. Mouffe, (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* Verso, London, p. 105

focus on utterances. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) distinguishes between the text and the social, where language, both written and spoken, replicates the social.[3] Their understanding of discourse is thus different from the rest of poststructuralist scholars, as they see social action existing at a different level and having a different relationship with language. At the other end of the spectrum discourses are seen as all-encompassing social meanings and activities. Jacques Derrida's approach – 'deconstruction', focuses on the logic of difference, around which all human activity is structured, and which can subsequently be deconstructed. The aim is to discover the oppositions on which the text is based and to reveal the complex systems of meaning. The binary oppositions in question are not just a part of linguistics, but according to Derrida they form the basis of distinction in Western thinking where concepts ('insides') are defined by their 'outsides'.[4] In Foucault the concept of discourse refers to historically specific systems of meaning which form the identities of subjects and objects.[5] Discourses are here understood as actual systems of social relations and social practices: thinking, talking, political action and policies are discourses.

These authors have left an important legacy in the field and all subsequent theorising is in one way or the other related to their work. Derrida's deconstruction is central to poststructuralist understanding how features are related in discourse and much of poststructuralist work still examines data from a standpoint of binary oppositions and 'inside'-'outside' distinctions between subjects. Foucault's method is still relevant if we want to get to the core of things and understand developments within discourses over a long period of time.

Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe are two thinkers who have further developed poststructuralist thinking and are still considered to be influential and relevant to the current developments in the field. In their seminal work, *Hegemony*

[3] Some of the most prominent scholars working in this tradition are Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak. See N. Fairclough (1992), *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, Cambridge; N. Fairclough (1995), *Media Discourse*, Edward Arnold, London; G. Weiss and R. Wodak (2007), *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinarity*, Palgrave, Basingstoke; R. Wodak and M. Meyer (2009), *Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis*, Sage Publications, London.
[4] J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, John Hopkins University Press, 1998.
[5] M. Foucault (1972), *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Tavistock, London, p.49

and Socialist Strategy[6], Laclau and Mouffe critically examine the history of Marxist thought. They reject its structural determinism and essentialism of class identity. They argue for the necessity to recognise the unfixity of every social identity and the way that the unfixity produces its effects, and that meaning is never given from the start but it depends on the hegemonic discourse within which it exists. According to this approach the social order has no essence of its own but it is organised around articulatory practices. Articulation establishes a relationship between elements in a way that their identity is modified as a result of that articulatory practice. The structured totality that results from it they call *discourse.*[7]

It is important to note here that poststructuralists do not claim that objects do not exist outside of discourse, but that they do not have *meaning* outside of discourse. In this way they never abandon the material character of discourse. Laclau and Mouffe thus define discourses as inclusive of all social practices and encompassing all social relations. The following passage well demonstrates the point:

> The fact that every object is constituted as an object of discourse has *nothing to do* with whether there is a world external to thought, or with the realism/idealism opposition. An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of 'natural phenomena' or 'expressions of the wrath of God', depends upon the structuring of a discursive field. What is denied is not that such objects exist externally to thought, but the rather different assertion that they could constitute themselves as objects outside any discursive condition of emergence.[8]

Poststructuralist discourse theory assumes that all objects and actions are meaningful and that their meaning is a product of historically specific systems of rules. It looks into the way in which social practices construct and contest the discourses that constitute social reality.[9] In doing so it stands against the epistemology that concentrates on laws and structures, and 'objects' and 'facts' that

[6] E. Laclau and C. Mouffe (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy,* Verso, London
[7] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony,* op. cit. p. 96 & 105
[8] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony,* op. cit. p. 108
[9] J. Torfing (1999), *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek*, Blackwell Publishers ltd, Oxford, p.8

speak for themselves and are waiting to be discovered. Poststructuralist approaches all reject causal mechanisms in favour of interpretation and understanding. This means that one of the main goals of discursive inquiry is to discover the historically specific rules and conventions that structure the production of meaning in a particular social context.[10]

In my study of Croatia I will examine how discourses of cooperation with the ICTY and respect for minorities have evolved within the wider setting of democratisation under the EU initiative, and what their role is in the reconstruction of Croatian identity. The focus will be on the links between Croatia's geographical and political setting with specific normative implications. The study will aim to reveal how certain discursive constructions emerge and how they constrain the political debate.

Poststructuralism emphasises language as being central to political study. Language is not just a tool for description but something that constructs those tools as well. Positivist epistemology understands that language is essentially about social and political phenomena, that it describes the visible and serves as a reference tool. Such a theory of meaning has 'led to the neglect of the value of commitments, institutional presuppositions, and models of individual and collective responsibility and interest implicit in the concepts employed in political inquiries'[11] A poststructuralist analysis requires a different model of a relationship between language and reality that is based on the understanding of language as constitutive of social and political phenomena. We cannot speak about the world and experiences we have before we establish boundaries that separate one object or concept from another. In this way language contains rules that present these boundaries for distinguishing phenomena and in this way create the objects and concepts that our speech then refers to.[12] Placing language at the centre of analysis radically departs from traditional approaches to international relations because it allows the possibility

[10] Ibid, p.10
[11] M. Shapiro, *Language and Political Understanding: The Politics of Discursive Practices*, Yale University Press, 1981, p.5
See also C. Taylor, 'Neutrality in Political Science', *The Philosophy of Social Explanation*, Alan Ryan, (ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 139-70
[12] Shapiro, *Language*, op. cit. p.20-21

that tools of analysis can be studied and deconstructed themselves.[13] Furthermore, it suggests a completely different conception of society than the one offered by scholars working within the rationalist/empiricist traditions. In this view the language does not merely mirror the 'real' world but is involved in its shaping, together with the actors that influence the structure of society by reproducing certain discourses. Interpretation is seen as dependent on a shared system of codes and symbols, languages and social practices. The knowledge of 'reality' shared in a specific social and political context is therefore socially constructed as well.[14]

Language is a concept that exists on several levels: the philological level, the cultural level and the political level.[15] The three are not necessarily separated but the political level is of particular importance for this study since language is used to legitimise political moves and to establish what might be interpreted as a fixed set of meanings which are difficult to challenge. The result of that is the creation of certain constructions of truth that obtain the natural way of being, a taken for granted quality. Laclau and Mouffe refer to this phenomenon as *hegemony*.[16] The state of hegemony is achieved when interpretation and understanding of certain phenomena acquire a taken for granted quality in a given society and are understood to possess objective validity. It as an articulatory practice instituting nodal points that partially fix the meaning of the social in an organised system of differences. Hegemonic practices involve 'the linking together of different identities and political forces into a common project, and the creation of new social orders from a variety of dispersed elements'.[17] In this sense hegemony does not simply equate the end result of domination, but encompasses the entire process of normalisation and its consequences. It is this very phenomenon of normalisation that makes social orders possible and apparently stable. The so-called *floating signifiers* in a given discourse have no fixed content and are able to embrace a series of meanings as a

[13] T. Diez, 'Speaking…Europe: the politics of integration discourse', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 6:4, Special Issue, Taylor & Francis Ltd, (1999)
[14] S. Guzzini (2000), 'A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations*, SAGE Publications, London/Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, Vol. 6(2):147-182, p.160
[15] G. Schopflin, 'Identities, politics and post-communism in Central Europe', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol. 9 (4), (2003), p.479
[16] Laclau and Mouffe, op. cit.
[17] D. Howarth, *Discourse*, op. cit. p.109

consequence.[18] In that process they are rearticulated and become a part of the discourse and are constructed according to the nodal points around which the hegemonic discourse is centred. The result of this process is that the hegemonic discourse becomes 'objective' in a society and establishes facts in that social context. Hegemony thus refers to a construction of a principal discursive formation. Later on I shall demonstrate how this translates into the Croatian context.

Nodal points, signifiers, discursive field, and antagonism

This thesis relies upon a number of authors but it is worth looking into several concepts developed by Laclau and Mouffe, given their importance in the field generally as well as for this thesis in particular. Following from the previous discussion about language and meaning, it is now necessary to look into the way that meaning becomes established and temporarily fixed. Poststructuralists reject the possibility of closure and exhaustion of meaning in the social setting. That suggests that meaning can only be fixed temporarily, rather than permanently, and the result is that the social is always in a state of flux. As discussed previously, this stabilising of systems of meaning or 'hegemonic formations'[19] is revolved around *nodal points*, which partially fix meaning and organise social orders. The authors say:

> If the social does not manage to fix itself in the intelligible and instituted forms of society, the social only exists, however, as an effort to construct the impossible object. Any discourse is constituted as an attempt to dominate the field of discursivity, to arrest the flow of difference, to construct a centre. We will call the privileged discursive points of this partial fixation, nodal points.[20]

[18] Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political*, op. cit.
[19] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, op. cit. p. 142
[20] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, op. cit. p. 112
Their concept has developed from Lacan and his concept of *point de caption.* See J. Lacan (1977), *Ecrits: A Selection*, Tavistock, London, also Y. Stavrakakis (1999), *Lacan and the Political*, Routledge, London.

Every discourse is comprised of a number of nodal points that temporarily fix the stability of that discourse. Nodal points are concepts that acquire a specific meaning in a given discourse. They have a prominent role in a discourse and have the power to define the meaning of other concepts that are related to them. For example, the concept of civilisation that works as a nodal point in the thesis defines the way that the concept of democracy is articulated in the Croatian context. The concept of civilisation is central for the functioning of political life in Croatia. As the analysis will show, all political discourse is to a degree linked to the nodal point of civilisation. Just like the concept of democracy, sovereignty and rights are also defined in relation to civilisation and their articulation in the political discourse depends on it. When mapping out the discourse during the analysis it is important to recognise which concepts play this role and how they relate to other relevant concepts encountered in a discourse. In this way we can draw a grid that demonstrates the discursive connections between concepts and how their mutual relationships shape the development of a discourse.

In this way nodal points create and sustain the identity of a discourse by constructing a knot of definite meanings in a particular setting.[21] Discourses of westernisation and progress revolve around this concept and depend on the meaning that it carries. This means that as Croatia defines itself as Western country and belonging to the Western civilisation (rather than the Balkans that belong to the East) signifiers 'democracy', 'the state' and 'sovereignty' depend on the nodal point of 'civilisation'. In this case it is the Western civilisation that works as a nodal point in the Croatian discourse, and 'democracy' is as a consequence defined in a very specific way that depends on the meaning of that nodal point. This leads us to conclude that nodal points structure a discourse and in doing so are able to unify various currents in society. For example, despite internal differences, several political parties have formed a coalition before the 2000 elections, and their coming together was made possible by the existence of this particular nodal point of civilisation. The discourse on westernisation was tied together and transformed the direction of Croatia's politics. This example thus confirms the theoretical assumption that nodal

[21] Torfing , *New Theories of Discourse,* op. cit. p. 98

points allow coherence and stability in a given discourse by providing points of (temporary) fixity of meaning.

It may seem that a discourse is completely stable or resilient to change, given its level of sedimentation in society. However, poststructuralism stresses that such stability is only superficial and temporary and that no matter how successful a given discourse is in dominating a discursive field it can never completely articulate all of its elements because there will always be existing features against which that discourse is defined.[22] Or to put it differently: something is always excluded. Closure is thus impossible with the absence of a fixed centre of a structure and there is always something that escapes the processes of signification within discourse. This means that through discursive articulation both nodal points and signifiers will undergo change at one point. To illustrate this I will look at several signifiers that were crucial for the Croatian case that underwent significant discursive changes. Sometimes this process is subtle and takes a long time, and sometimes, as in the Croatian case, the change is more abrupt and it is easier to pinpoint the exact moment when the change occurred.

Another important feature of Laclau and Mouffe's work is the concept of *antagonism.* They argue against traditional understandings of social conflict as being a clash of social agents with entirely developed identities and interest. Laclau and Mouffe argue that antagonism occurs because social agents are unable to attain their identities and interests and that an 'enemy' is to blame for that failure.[23] Antagonism positions boundaries between the inside and outside and works as a negative experience of the established discourse. In this way they play an important role in the construction of a discourse as something against which it identifies. At these points the boundaries of a discourse can be identified and analysed and it is there that the identity is least stable.[24] This limit of the social is not something like a frontier that separates two territories; there is no perception of anything beyond. The limit of the social is thus given within the social itself as something that threatens to subvert it, and to thwart its attempt to achieve final closure and stability. Society never manages

[22] Howarth, *Discourse,* op. cit. p. 103
[23] Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony,* op. cit p. 125
[24] Howarth, *Discourse,* op. cit.

to fully be, because everything in it is penetrated by its limits, which prevent it from constituting itself as an objective reality.[25]

Therefore we can understand antagonism as a clash of identities of sorts. Identities constitute each other through positive and negative identification, or to put it differently, they articulate and rearticulate each other in a complex web of interaction. For example, Croatia 'needs' the Serbian other that is defined in a negative way in order to build its own identity as being different to Serbia. The relationship between them is one of antagonism. There is a frontier between them and their identities are clearly defined. However, this does not mean that Serbia exists outside of this discourse. On the contrary, it is a part of the discourse and it presents the limit of the social in the Croatian context because it is perceived as something threatening that can subvert it. It is because of the phenomenon of antagonism that discourses show the impossibility of closure.[26] Croatian identity as a western country will never be complete or final because of the antagonistic relationship with Serbia, who at the same time plays an important role in the construction of Croatian identity in the first place.

The concepts discussed in these sections are important for most poststructuralist analysis, although the emphasis on certain aspects varies among them. The following section of the chapter will look into the relationship between the subject and identity and discuss the way these concepts are related. Afterwards, several studies will be discussed and their importance for the development of this approach will be looked at, with the specific aim of placing this thesis within a body of literature and assessing its merits for the development of the field.

[25] Torfing, *New Theories*, op. cit, p. 127
[26] Torfing, *New Theories*, op. cit, p. 126

The subject, self and identity in poststructuralist thought

A study of identity deserves a closer look into the way that we define the term and what its position is in the wider poststructuralist framework. In order to keep with the previously examined literature I believe that it is useful to first examine the work of Laclau and Mouffe on the topic before proceeding to find another way of discussing and defining identity. In *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* the authors consider the subject to exist only as a position within a specific discursive formation. They claim that a subject position is an identity that is defined in relations to all other identities/subjects that exist within that discursive formation. The subject here is therefore an effect of the particular hegemonic system, rather than an actor being capable of action. This suggests that individuals hold a certain subject position that is the source of their identity. It is possible to occupy a number of different subject positions at the same time, depending on the discursive structure.[27] For example, a person can at the same time be Scottish, a father, a teacher and a supporter of a political party. These subject positions exist independently of one another and are not in conflict.

As a general rule, these positions or identities depend on the overarching hegemonic articulation and the nodal points that appear in the discourse. These identities/subject positions will be compatible if they relate to one another according to the relationship between the nodal point and the signifiers. However, it is equally possible for these subject positions to be in conflict if they do not conform to the logic of the links between the positions within that particular discourse. Thus, it is not impossible for a person to hold several identities that are in less harmonious relationships. Such combinations then create difficulties for the stability of that identity and show instabilities in the given discourse that allows for such combinations in the first place. Such identities cannot be sustained given their instability and always undergo some kind of a discursive shift that will bring them in alignment to the overall hegemonic articulation of a given discourse. The Croatian case will serve as an example of this situation where the country's identity

[27] Howarth 2000, Howarth and Stavrakakis 2000

needs to be reconstructed in order for it to be compatible with the nodal points that govern the official political discourse, and will be explored in detail in the following chapters.

The problem with Laclau and Mouffe's theorising of subjectivity is that there is no explanation of how subject identities are rearticulated in the process of the rearticulation of the hegemonic discourse. The subject seems to depend on the structure in occupying certain subject positions, rather than actively constructing its identity. As a consequence of this apparent fixity, the discursive structure becomes impossible to re-articulate and it becomes sedimented and difficult to change. For this reason Laclau and Mouffe's model resembles a structuralist account in which agency is passive and thus problematic and incompatible with poststructuralist theorising. I argue that it is necessary to develop the poststructuralist theory further in order to take greater account of the active ways in which identities are constructed and reproduced. In this way poststructuralism will be able to defend itself from criticism for not being able to theorise change. I propose a direction that is more dialogical than what Laclau and Mouffe suggest, which allows us to analyse this question by looking critically within the structure and addressing the relationship between the discourse and the subject as the location where change is generated.[28]

It is important to note that all the authors discussed in this chapter essentially discuss very similar things. They all address the problem of identifying a political actor but do that from different angles. All political analysis always returns to the question of who acts and why. As discussed previously, answers vary depending where one stands on the ontological and epistemological spectrum. The shared assumption of all scholars working in a poststructuralist tradition is that social actors do not have an essence in themselves. Since meaning is crucial for all

[28] Laclau's later work on political subjectivity addresses this question and suggests a more active form of political agency. He develops an explanation of the way a re-articulation of a hegemonic discourse occurs and how the rearticulation of subject identities is involved in the process. I am not engaging with this literature in this thesis because of Laclau's engagement with the work of Jacques Lacan which is not relevant for the empirical study of identity employed here, and which addresses a different angle of the question of identity. For a more detailed account of Laclau's work see *New reflections on the revolution of our time* (1990), London: New York, Verso; *Emancipation(s)* (1996), London, Verso

communication, and meaning is created in discourse, it follows logically that who the actor is and what it does is also created and reproduced in discourse.

Another argument against the essentialist understanding of a political actor is simply that unless we are dealing with an actual human being, the actor in question does not have a physical, biological body but is a kind of a collective being, something that does not exist in the natural world. A political institution is assumed to act as a unified body, but it is comprised of a set of laws, norms and a number of people who make it work. It is therefore impossible to view such an actor (or a subject) as something autonomous, and equally it is impossible to attribute to its existence qualities that human beings possess. Although in everyday speech we talk of a national psyche, of national psychology or national consciousness, such expressions vaguely address the issue in question. Staying true to poststructuralist principles of this thesis, I argue that these things only exist as symbolic expressions of more complex phenomena that are found in particular discursive formations. In other words, discussing changes in the way Croatia defines itself and the way it behaves on the international stage has nothing to do with a supposed 'national being' that possesses certain psychological features or any other aspect of a human person, but is rather a question of a number of discursive constructs that operate within the given discursive structure.

The following discussion concerns a group of authors from the Copenhagen School of security studies who examine the process of identity construction in the area of foreign politics and security. The analysis moves away from the agent – structure debate towards a process in which actors define and re-define their identity through interaction with other actors. This section will demonstrate a practical use of how a study of identity can be applied to different case studies in the field of politics, as well as allow for a further development of identity theorising within the poststructuralist framework.

2.3 The Copenhagen School and the study of identity

The Copenhagen School's 1988 publication *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*[29] opened up new debates in the field of security studies and made significant contributions by broadening the debate of the discipline and re-defining the meaning of security. While retaining the traditional view that security should primarily be understood as the survival of a state against existential threats they added a number of areas that were not traditionally linked to security and by doing so recognised the importance of non-military issues. These include political, economic and ecological areas, among others. The Copenhagen School departed from a rationalist framework and moved closer to poststructuralist thinking in claiming that security issues are created as such and call that process 'securitisation.'[30]

Although the main focus of the Copenhagen School is security their relevance for this thesis is twofold. Their theorising of identity that has made significant contributions to the study in the field of politics has provided a foundation for my own understanding of the subject. Secondly, the case studies upon which their theorising has been built in many ways resemble my own research interest. The poststructuralist aspect of the school's theoretical underpinnings demanded an emphasis on the social aspect of security, which is where we find a distinct focus on identity as a crucial factor for their work. Discourses of security are closely linked to constructions of identity, since they tend to bring communities together and call upon difference between those who are 'inside' and those who are 'outside'. This process is thus conducted through the process of othering where actors are outlined and defined as being the opposites of each other. They are referred to as self and other and stand for the subject of analysis and its antagonist. The other is defined and

[29] B. Buzan, O. Waever, J. de Wilde (1988), *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder: London

[30] For a more detailed account of the Copenhagen School consult B. Buzan *People, Sates and Fear* (1991), Second Edition, New York, Harvester Wheatsheaf; B. Buzan, O. Waever and J. de Wilde (1998), *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder CO; O. Waever (1995), 'Securitisation and Desecuritisation' in R. D. Lipschutz (ed), *On Security*, Columbia University Press, New York, pp.46-86; D. Campbell (1998), *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, University of Minnessota Press, Minneapolis; M.J. Shapiro (1988), *The Politics of Representation*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison

understood as a source of fear and therefore it becomes a security question in specific contexts.

Furthermore, their emphasis on language that treats this process of securitisation as a speech act makes their work open to interdisciplinary use.[31] As I have already noted, the following works have been an immense source of both inspiration for my own research project and for identifying possibilities for further refinement of their ideas and research material within the poststructuralist framework generally. They all address security in different ways but what is important for this thesis is their focus on identity construction and its relationship with politics. I will first look into these studies and assess their relevance for the area of identity studies as well as for my own work, and discuss the theory that underpins their analyses of identity, which also provides the foundation of data analysis in this dissertation.

Iver Neumann's book *Uses of the other: 'the East' in European identity formation*[32] addresses region building in Europe as a wider topic and focuses on the emergence of identities in Nordic countries in relation to its others: Europe and Turkey. His study demonstrates the complexity of identity formation on three levels: civilisation (Europe), region (*Norden* and Central Europe), and nations (Russia and Bashkotorstan). The theoretical emphasis is on the collective self and international cooperation, as well as an in-depth discussion of the development of the self-other theorising in the Western thought.

The first part of the book studies the self-other relationship at the civilizational level and compares Russia and Turkey that have existed as European others for several centuries. The Turkish case addresses a radical other that has always been an outsider and never managed to achieve the status of a European state, despite at one point in history having ruled over a quarter of European territory.[33] The case of the Russian other is different in that its status is different from that of Turkey. The main question that Europe has tried to answer is the question of where Russia belongs, which reveals that there has always been ambivalence about Russia's

[31] O. Weaver, 'Securitisation and Desecuritisation', op. cit., p. 55
[32] I. Neumann (1999), *Uses of the other: 'the East' in European identity formation,* Manchester University Press, Manchester
[33] Neumann, op. cit. p.40

identity in Europe. Although problematic in that respect, the European discourse demonstrated a degree of possibility for Russia to be recognised as European, which does not exist in relation to Turkey. The study proceeds to examine a change in the construction of Russia and its potential to become civilised, i.e. more like Europe by internalising European values. However, the study demonstrates the problematic position of Russia as still being barbaric under the layer of European civilised front. The concluding remarks introduce the notion of 'Russia as a learner' (from Europe) and a possibility of its radical otherness to evolve into a less radical other.

This aspect of Neumann's study was quite innovative in respect of the other work conducted on identity within the political domain. Recognising that the other can have different degrees of its otherness regarding the subject that is being studied has important implications. It becomes obvious that the self-other relationship cannot be treated in a way that assumes that these identities are static and that the international system is static also. Both the position of Turkey and Russia change in terms of politics and the way Europe relates to them over a longer period of time. Neumann reaches a point in analysis where he briefly discusses the possibility of Russia changing and being recognised as European but does not go deeply enough into the material and as a result this notion has remained largely unexamined. Also, there is no discussion about theoretical implications of this finding and the author does not explain how the change within Russia occurred. He also does not explain why Turkey does not follow the same discursive change and why its otherness remains more radical than that of Russia. Neumann's findings thus serve as an indicator of what can be done regarding this question of a changing radical other and are a good starting point for elaborating on the process of identity change both in terms of the self and its (radical) other.

In the cases of making of regions Neumann addresses the problem of regions in IR literature and examines the concepts of Northern and Central Europe. He argues that both are relatively new concepts that during the Cold War existed between 'the East' and 'the West'. This East/West divide is seen as crucial for the identity of these two regions, and it is something that I will address in more detail in the following data analysis chapters. Neumann acknowledges the importance of

examining the genesis of a region and the way it develops, a feature that was previously not recognised. He looks at different discourses on the same region and strategies employed in the discursive construction of their identity. The case of Central Europe features Russia as the other, which was revealed as a necessary component in the development of the discourse on Central European and the forging of the self that was highly compatible with European representations of Russia. We can thus conclude that region building is thus always a political project in which actors 'describe a readily observable reality, in which certain peoples inhabiting certain lands happen to share certain cultural traits'.[34] Neumann demonstrates how the discourse on Central Europe offers endless variations on the use and application of geopolitical and cultural criteria to delineate a physical space. This is a very important aspect of Neumann's findings but perhaps what is missing here is a more explicit link with the ethical component of identity construction. As I shall argue later on, the two are always connected and mutually reinforce one another.

In the section on making of nations, Russia and Bashkotorstan offer interesting case studies of the uses of the other in national identity formation. In doing so, Neumann takes a different perspective – the perspective of the other. The two cases show how communities that are 'othered' deal with it in their own discourses. This feature is very interesting and something that is often missing in most studies since authors tend to focus on a particular political problem and address it from their own perspective. There is nothing wrong in such an approach in itself if we assume that all points of view will have equal value and will be readily available for readers. The reality, however, is rather different. Local voice is rarely heard and when it does appear in the academic circles it tends to be assessed from the perspective of the dominant paradigm. To relate this to the case of Croatia and the Balkans, there is a plethora of available literature that addresses a variety of topics related to the two, but it mostly comes from the English speaking world and remains on the level of study where 'objective' outsiders look in and explain the observed phenomena. Neumann's inclusion of two discourses that look back at Europe is a laudable effort to bring something new to studies of identity, by being sensitive to the

[34] Neumann, *Uses of the other*, op. cit. p.144

local voice and what they have to say for themselves. My study on Croatia is in a similar way contributes to the number of studies that look at the local discourses and the way they respond and interact with international discourses that concern them directly.

My overall assessment of Neumann's study is that it successfully demonstrates how the construction and reconstruction of identity exists on several levels and how they ought to be conceptually captured in order for us to fully understand the complexity of the process. One of the central findings of this book is the outlining in great detail how 'the West' discursively features in the forging of European, regional and national identity, albeit in different ways. Neumann's study allows us to recognise regions as variations of nation-building and to look for similarities in their discourses. Furthermore, the role of political actors (who are region builders in this case) is central to the process. This claim does not erode poststructuralist belief in mutual-constitutiveness of identity and policy, but it can open up some questions about the extent to which international actors influence domestic politics and identity, such as the extent to which the European Union has helped to constitute the modern day Croatia.

Looking at domestic political actors brings the focus back home and opens up the space for studying the nature of social and political action more generally. Neumann's findings challenge those of Laclau and Mouffe and other scholars who follow their theorising by demonstrating that there is indeed more to actors than their subject position within a discursive structure. However, it must be noted that the study does not go into sufficient detail about the way domestic actors influence particular discourses. The study is a great example of looking into history and following the emergence of specific discourses on the self and other and linking them to contemporary political and social events. Such a Foucauldian type of study is indispensable for a clear understanding of the world of today. The scope of the book did not allow for an even wider study of self and other, which is not necessarily a great fault, given that one piece of research cannot answer all the questions in one volume. But this lack in Neumann's work serves as an inspiration to do that and expand his theoretical insight, as well as possibilities with case studies. My aim in

the following chapters is to fill this gap and look at the way political actors are involved with identity construction and what their role is in promoting new discourses in a particular sphere.

European Integration and National Identity edited by Lene Hansen and Ole Waever[35] is another study of Nordic countries, but this time the focus is on national debates on European integration and examining the high level of Euroscepticism in all of the countries. All four studies examine the debates preceding the referenda in each of the Nordic countries and examine how concepts 'nation' and 'state' are used in the national debates on Europe. Because of this they are to an extent studies of national identity because they looks into how the concept of 'nation' is related to 'state' in particular national contexts and how that relationship defines each construction of national identity. But the analysis also does more: it demonstrates how these concepts and the way they are discursively related on a national level shape political debate on the European Union in specific national contexts. Each study demonstrates how political actors present political issues through a clarification of how that question fits with the country's particular discursive construction of its identity. Europe is thus understood in relation to how a country defines itself and how the concepts of 'state', 'nation' and 'the people' have been shaped historically. The studies show that the EU project is constituted in positive or negative terms, depending on whether it poses a threat to national discourses and towards the ideas and concepts that are critical to a country's identity.

The book looks into the debates on European integration in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland and each study proceeds in the same way. An account of the situation in the period of the 1990s is given, followed by an account of historical formation of the key concepts of the studies: 'state', 'nation' and 'the people' and the way they are linked to one another in each national discourse. The analysis of the debates focuses on the relationship between these key concepts and 'Europe', and the way that political debate developed in each of the countries. The findings share many similarities and several significant differences that are worth mentioning. All countries had in common the way signifier 'the people' was at the

[35] L. Hansen and O. Waever (eds), (2002), *European Integration and national Identity,* Routledge, London

core of national identity. In Denmark ‘the people’ was closely linked to any political discourse, rejecting all that seemed to threaten this construction of identity based on the people-nation-state constellation. The study proceeds to show how the European Union integrationist project fit (or to be precise, did not fit) with this particular construction of Danish identity and the problems between the two. In the case of Norway what was central to the national identity discourse is separation from Denmark and its culture on one level, and the separation between ‘the people’ and ‘state’ which is here understood in terms of its bureaucratic apparatus. The European Union was discursively tied to the state and as a consequence it shared its negative connotation and was discursively placed in direct opposition to ‘the people’.

While Norway and Denmark showed a degree of similarities, Finland and Sweden painted a different picture. Euroscepticism in Finland seemed to be less strong and the referendum was passed with relative ease. For Finland the main problem was cultural identity they wished to preserve from possible imposition of a ‘EU cultural identity’. Even federalism would have proven acceptable for Finland if it were a case of purely economic and political union that would allow the national culture to remain free and intact. This case demonstrated a duality between cultural and political nation that makes it singular among the Nordic states. Sweden, on the other hand, demonstrates a strong discursive link between ‘the people’ and ‘state’, but what makes it different from Denmark and Norway is that in those two we find a anti-elitist conception of the people who are constructed as being essentially different and separated from those individuals who work for the state. Sweden links the ‘state’ and ‘the people’ in a positive way and leads to a relationship that in this particular circumstance requires a profound rearticulation of both concepts in order for them to be able to accommodate the EU integrationist project.

Despite showing differences between the countries, the study demonstrates that in all four countries the relationship between signifiers was central to the debate on EU integration. National identity was shown to be central to the debate, and that it encompassed political and economic questions, as well as cultural ones. This finding is compatible with broad poststructuralist claims about discourses and material reality discussed earlier in this chapter. The findings support the theoretical claims

about the way discourses work and how they are related to foreign policy. The analysis in this volume offers a detailed historical account of the discursive changes of the signifiers 'people', 'fatherland', 'state' and their relationships. The study demonstrates how to identify signifiers in a clear way and how to read the data in order to follow the political debates for which these signifiers are crucial. Socio-political context is examined in a step-by-step process, and the changes that occurred throughout the centuries are convincingly presented in that attempt. What this volume has offered for this thesis is a good starting point for reading identity and relating it to the political sphere. It has highlighted the importance of history and discursive development of signifiers that are crucial for a study of this type. The analysis has demonstrated the need to take into account a variety of domestic factors and discursive links between them. It has also given a good example of how to study a region and how to go about looking for explanations in variations of the same question that is normally applied to the national context.

The volume's theoretical findings stimulate further the debate between poststructuralist scholars and their intergovernmentalist critics, which would seem to be somewhat out of date at this point, because poststructuralism has entered the mainstream managed to gain some ground in the wider field of international relations and politics. It has demonstrated its relevance by providing new insights into the ways in which politics can be studied and understood. However, the authors' theorising on agency has been most insightful and fruitful. The question of agency and structural determinism has not vanished from the poststructuralist debates about its own scope and nature. The authors in this volume bring us closer to understanding political change and at which level we can expect to find it. To be more specific, they point out that changes within structure carried out by political agents generate change. At the same time they allow the possibility that external factors could be responsible for generating significant change in particular circumstances, but that in their case studies that was not the case. Their work is thus directly related to Iver Neumann's, both in terms of regional focus and theoretical insights. It becomes clear that empirical analysis of this kind is of utmost importance for further development of theory in the field. Equally, it demonstrates how theory informs empirical analysis and that both are better off for it.

As with the previous volume, my study on Croatia has used some of the elements that concern the relationship between politics and identity construction. My study will take into consideration the existence of one key external factor – the European Union, and demonstrate how its role was crucial for the reconstruction of identity in the Croatian case. I will use the insights provided by the authors of this volume and build upon them in terms of using a different region as well as taking a step further in discussing identity and the question of radical otherness in relation to politics.

This leads me to the last book that addresses international politics and identity in this section. In her book *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War,*[36] Lene Hansen ambitiously embarks upon several tasks. The book addresses criticisms that have emerged amongst from mainly empiricist scholars about the nature of poststructuralist inquiry and argues for its relevance in the international relations field. In order to do so, she takes a critical approach to the question of poststructuralist methodology and argues that empiricist criticism can best be refuted with a thoroughly worked out system of doing research. The book thus functions as a long overdue handbook on poststructuralist methodology, exemplified on the case of Bosnia and the conflict in the Balkans.

Hansen's primary assumption is that identity and foreign policy are mutually constituted. She explains identity construction through the self – other relationship and the process of othering, discussing different variations of the self – other relationship and elaborates on different analytical lenses for studying that relationship. The level of inquiry in this volume is foreign policy, where the research programme is based on the assumption that policies are dependent upon representations of threat, country, security problem, or crisis they seek to address, which places the book within the Copenhagen School's main research interest on security. It is argued that foreign policies need to ascribe meanings to the situation and to construct the objects within it, and in doing so they articulate and draw upon specific identities of other states, regions, peoples, and institutions as well as on the identity of a national, regional, or institutional subject.

[36] L. Hansen (2006), *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War,* Routledge, Abingdon

Several chapters of the book address the need of having a well-designed methodology, something that mainstream social science finds lacking in poststructuralist analyses. Hansen argues that this kind of work requires clear ontological and epistemological assumptions that are able to provide a set of rules and guidelines for conducting research, not so different from positivist principles. It is the clarity of guidelines that allow for a logical and thorough analysis that can progress from one stage to another and show how different elements in a piece of poststructuralist research are not accidental, but a well-designed project that has a coherent basis for its analysis. Hansen points out that it is important to have a well-designed starting point but that it is possible to be flexible as research progresses, because the whole process often provides opportunities for exploring new ideas and unexpected findings. This attitude allows for a degree of flexibility and openness that can prevent a researcher from becoming too dogmatic and confined by their own methodological principles. But at the same time in order to be able to stay true to initial methodological points, the researcher has to be able to account for every single decision made during the analysis, in order to remain within the proposed methodological framework.

Hansen's book relates to other studies of identity but it takes the discussion a step further by offering a clear methodological framework. While the work of Neumann thoroughly looked into the self and other relationships, it does so in a way that to a degree seems intuitive to the reader. Likewise, the other studies discussed previously were also based on thorough historical research and connected to contemporary questions, but there was a lack in clear setup of the study. As a result, the studies are difficult to grasp for those readers who are not well acquainted with poststructuralist work and fail to connect to the wider international relations field. Hansen manages to bridge this gap without compromising poststructuralist principles and takes the reader through the theoretical and case study material in a step-by-step manner.

The case of Bosnia that follows in the second part of the book shows the theory put into practice, and gives an in-depth study of how different representations of the war in Bosnia influenced the way international actors decided to act. The study

successfully demonstrates how identities and foreign policy are indeed articulated and mutually constitutive in discourse, and as such is an exemplary piece of poststructuralist research, as well as a good contribution to the literature on the Balkans more generally. Although the focus is on the Western debates about Bosnia, the study manages to shed some light on the identity of the Balkans as a reflection of the on-going debates and existing discourses on the subject.

It has to be said that this book discusses discourses about Bosnia in a very interesting way, but it does so from a perspective of an outsider looking in – the focus is after all how the West has debated Bosnia and how that influenced certain political decisions.[37] What is missing here is a domestic voice: a discourse on Bosnia from Bosnia. This mirrors the majority of studies on the Balkans where locals rarely get a chance to speak for themselves and are always represented through a foreign fantasy. This study is extremely valuable for the information it provides, as well as its theoretical-methodological discussions, but it leaves us wondering what could be added to the existing knowledge if a local perspective was somehow included. My thesis seeks to rectify this in a sense, by looking at the domestic sphere and domestic discourses about identity, by conducting the analysis of the data in the original language, and from a local perspective.[38] In doing so it directly contributes to the literature on the Balkans, and it does that from a standpoint of a local. *Security as Practice* is used as a starting point in terms of methodology and a model of analysing data. The proposed analysis it raises questions about the nature of co-operation and political action generally.

Both Neumann and Hansen address the question of geographical space in identity construction. *Norden,* Central Europe and the Balkans are shown to be recent political constructs rather than 'natural' regions. In the case of the Balkans and Central Europe this is particularly evident since there is no final definition of which countries belong to them. Both authors demonstrate that region is a political concept primarily and Hansen in particular provides an important framework within which it is possible to study the geographical aspect of identity formation and link it to a

[37] Hansen, *Security as Practice,* op. cit.
[38] Advantages and difficulties of conducting analysis on one's own country and culture will be discussed in more detail in chapter three when addressing the importance of reflexivity in research.

wider set of questions. While Neumann discusses the relationship between culture and geography, Hansen links geographical space with a temporal and ethical dimension. It can be argued that culture is a part of this ethical dimension and that it is also closely related to the temporal element as well, since culture assumes an amount of time that it has been in existence, and it cannot exist without a reference to morality in some way. Hansen has suggested a way of studying these three dimensions of identity construction by looking for references to each during data analysis. In this way we can establish a web of meanings that shows how the discourse functions. As these authors have demonstrated, a geographical space always has a political underpinning, and so it cannot be analysed in isolation from other dimensions.

2.4. Identity studies in the wider international setting

The following studies address the question of identity in a wider political setting, with an emphasis on the European Union and its role in collective identity formation and policy issues in its neighbouring countries. This section will discuss the relevance of poststructuralist work and its focus on identity in broadening the scope of research topics, as well as showing the existing diversity in the field.

Identity and regionalism has been researched by Michelle Pace, with the focus on the Mediterranean and the discursive construction of its identity. In *The Politics of Regional Identity*[39] Pace goes beyond a definition of region as a geographical-political unit and seeks to highlight the process of how a region comes to be defined in specific discursive settings. Her case study is the Mediterranean and the emergence of the European Community's bilateral relations from the 1960s onwards. The study looks at how different discourses about the Mediterranean have

[39] M. Pace (2006), *The Politics of Regional Identity: Meddling with the Mediterranean*, Routledge, Abingdon

influenced the development of the European Union's policies. The study is based upon two discourses: that of the European Union (derived from discourses of its member states Italy, France and Spain), and that of Greece, Morocco and Malta. The study revealed how policy-makers define a geographical and political space and the way that translates into policy.

Although identity is not the main focus of the study it is a central underlying concept and the study addresses some of its relevant aspects. The study looks at national identity as well as the identity of a region and problems that arise from this development. In the aftermath of 9/11 there was an increasingly negative image of the South – the Mediterranean Arab world that was linked to illegal immigration, drug trafficking, Islamic radicalism and international terrorism. Creating an area of peace and stability in that area was seen as crucial for Europe and its security. The in-depth discussion of these discourses reveals a number of internal and external others who play different roles in identity formation, from a threatening radical other, to a non-threatening other that has positive connotations. The book discusses the process of EU identity formation in the context of the Mediterranean area and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) that was launched in November 1995.

Discourses of Italy, France and Spain have been examined in detail with the purpose of showing how national discourses on the Mediterranean have found their way onto the EU's agenda and the EMP. The identity of the Mediterranean is contested and the relationship between the two entities are quite complex, which is discussed within the framework of the EU's foreign policy. The way that EU member states discursively construct the Mediterranean region reveals a complex self-other relationship, where the Mediterranean is not European and carries a set of characteristics that are in opposition to the way Europe is constructed in the EU's discourse. This relationship between the superior Europe that is the teacher, and the inferior Mediterranean that is a learner, forms the basis of the cooperation found in the EMP.

The analysis reveals temporal, spatial and ethical elements to the othering of the Mediterranean. One of the things that become increasingly apparent is that Europe treats the Mediterranean as an entity that is developing along the same

timeline as itself, but is late in its development. However, despite this potential for development and moving closer to Europe, its otherness remains constant despite discursive developments and variations among the EU's member states. What remains common among them is the discursive construct of a threat. The author concludes her analysis by stating that the Mediterranean is one of Europe's many others that are necessary for the identity construction (and reconstruction) of Europe.

One of the study's strengths is the analysis of both the discourse of Europe and of three Mediterranean countries, which allows for an interesting comparison between the insiders and the outsiders. This kind of comparative work is not often found, since a significant number of studies look at the other from the perspective of an actor looking from the outside, which tends to be a position of power and self-confessed superiority.

In *Rethinking the Mediterranean: Reality and Re-Presentation in the Creation of a Region*[40], Pace also discusses the Mediterranean as a region and pays special attention to the process of region building in IR theory. An examination of EU discourses on the Mediterranean reveals practices that give this area a fixed meaning, where the Mediterranean as a region is again revealed as an other in Europe's process of identity construction.

The theory that underpins the study is not strictly concerned with regionalism, but is rooted in identity politics and its theorising. Region building is seen in terms of how geopolitical space is defined by a number of actors, where critical geopolitics questions the nature of identities and other processes found in the production of knowledge about a geographical and political space. Identity is thus a result of discursive practices, where the identity of the Mediterranean, articulated by the EU, reflects back upon the EU's identity and reveals a number of features that define it. This is a two way process where identity and identity construction reveal complex relationships between actors and various aspects of their interaction.

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[40] M. Pace, Rethinking the Mediterranean: Reality and Re-Presentation in the Creation of a Region in F. Laursen (ed)(2003) *Comparative Regional Integration: Theoretical Perspectives*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp.161-183.

Pace argues that the way Europe determines the boundaries of its political space and of its identity can be considered under the heading of a common threat. This aspect of her work keeps her close to the theorising of the Copenhagen School and their contribution to a more complex understanding of the relationship between security and identity. In the European discourse the Mediterranean has a negative connotation of a threat because it is articulated as a space that is not stable and is inherently dangerous. The analysis shows that although the EU has had a particular relationship with the area through a series of initiatives, it is still not clear what the Mediterranean is and how to best identify its features, as well as the on-going problem of establishing its boundaries. Pace's work demonstrates that despite the inconsistencies in defining the Mediterranean and variations among the discourses of the EU's member states, what is constant is the perception of a security threat that the Mediterranean represents, and its inferiority in regards to Europe. This area of diversity becomes discursively unified through the discourse of securitisation of the Mediterranean in the EU's discourse. This allows us to identify the Mediterranean as one of Europe's radical others, where it features as a mirror image to the stable, peaceful Europe. It is here that the EU reveals its understanding of the Mediterranean countries through the prism of its own concerns, which are mainly security issues.

It can be argued that in this way the Mediterranean functions as a radical other to the peaceful, stable, organised Europe, and is constructed as an entity that does not show much potential for change, despite EU efforts to civilise that space. National discourses and the EU's discourse, defined through the EMP, can in this way coexist together, despite their internal differences. Pace suggests that EU member states require a radical other that is defined as a threat in order to defend their interests in the area.[41]

Pace's work demonstrates that identity is crucial for understanding a variety of political processes, including foreign policy and security, as well as learning about identity construction at a supra-national level. It acknowledges the complexity of the process and raises important questions about the range of otherness that is present in

[41] M. Pace (2002) The Ugly Duckling of Europe: The Mediterranean in the Foreign Policy of the European Union, *Journal of European Area Studies, Vol.10, No 2,* pp.189-210

the case study. However, despite its meticulous reading of the Mediterranean's identity from various perspectives, the study does not look into the way an other can change. The author stresses that othering is crucial for identity construction and treats the Mediterranean other as a radical other throughout, despite the acknowledgement that various parts of that area carry different degrees of otherness in respect to the European Union and its member states.

In *Constructing identity and relating to difference: understanding the EU's mode of differentiation*[42] Bahar Rumelili discusses how different constitutive dimensions produce different relationships of othering. She looks at the nature of difference, social distance and the response of the other. Her analysis is based on three case studies: Morocco, Turkey and Central and Eastern European states and their relationships with the European Union. The starting point of the study is the EU and the question of othering in its identity formation. The argument put forward is that the diversity of the EU's interactions with states on its periphery has not been adequately explained, and that a different perspective of looking into these modes of differentiation is required. While Rumelili supports the claim that othering is crucial for identity formation, she states that this does not imply a relationship based on mutual exclusion and the perception of the other as a threat, and argues for a need to consider variation and degree when looking into an other.

Stressing the social construction of the discourses of difference, Rumelili argues that, on the one hand, if difference is constructed as deriving from inherent characteristics, such as the other being a separate entity from the subject of the study, then it is not possible for the identity of the other to ever change, as it will always remain a separate entity. If, on the other hand, the other's difference is constructed in terms of acquired characteristics, there is a possibility for change in the other's identity. In this way Rumelili distinguishes between the ontological question of who the other is, and the behavioural practices that are linked with acquired characteristics of the other.

[42] Bahar Rumelili (2004), Constructing identity and relating to difference: understanding the EU's mode of differentiation in *Review of International Studies, Vol. 30,* pp. 27–47

Her discussion of the EU's interaction with Morocco, Turkey and CEE states shows how differences in their relations lead to different relationships of othering and the conditions under which these processes take place. In the case of Central and Eastern European states, their shared European identity, based on geography and culture, has allowed for EU membership. The relationship between the two is that of superiority (EU) and inferiority (CEECs), of teacher and learner. Thus, according to Rumelili, CEECs' inherent characteristics (geography and culture) are shared with the EU, while the acquired ones (democracy and capitalism) were subject to development and change. In this way CEECs were able to join the EU through their identity of a non-radical other that is sufficiently similar to the EU and not a threat.

Morocco does not share the same geographical space or culture and is thus inherently different and non-European, and so without the possibility to become an EU member state. Its acquired characteristics have added to the inherent ones and so secured its status as an outsider without any possibility for change. The case of Turkey is more complex, according to Rumelili, and demonstrates fluctuating discourses about Turkey and its characteristics. Discourses on possible Turkish membership thus depend on the way Turkey is discursively constructed both in terms of inherent and acquired characteristics.

Rumelili's work on Turkey demonstrates the earlier theoretical discussion about the process of othering. Examining Greek-Turkish relations within the wider framework of the European Union shows how the EU's discourse influences the change within the discourse of the Turkish other.[43] In her analysis Rumelili closely examines the relationship between the EU as an institution that proclaims to represent a European collectivity and Greece and Turkey through a number of discourses. She identifies a change in identity and interest re-definition in relation to both Greece and Turkey. A new, pluralistic perception emerges, closely connected to the discourse of Europe.

[43] B. Rumelili (2005), The European Union and Cultural Change in Greek-Turkish Relations, *Working Paper Series in EU Border Conflicts Studies*, No. 17, Birmingham, University of Birmingham

In *Transforming the Greek-Turkish conflicts: the EU and 'what we make of it'*[44]Rumelili examines the role and development of the European Union in the conflicts between the two countries. She argues that the positive impact of the EU on Greek-Turkish relations depended on domestic actors who were willing to use the EU framework as the basis for cooperation. These actors have depended on the EU to provide the framework of incentives, ideas and norms within which they can conceptualise their policy changes. This relationship of mutual dependency was established after Turkey gained EU membership candidacy. A closer look at the case study reveals that identity is an important aspect in the relations between Greece and Turkey, as well as between the two countries and the European Union. The fluctuating relations between Greece and Turkey always retained radical otherness at their centre, up until the very end of the 20th century. The involvement of the EU has opened up an avenue for a different dynamic between the two states and closer cooperation between them. Since 1999, when Turkey gained candidacy status, Rumelili argues that it ceased to perceive its neighbours as security threats, and accepted the link between EU membership and the resolution of conflicts with Greece. Previously antagonistic and oppositional identities gradually started to change in the direction of a less radical other. For example, the EU's discourse represented Turkey as unable to change and inherently non-European before the 1999 turning point. Equally, Greece positively identified with the EU as long as the EU's discourse was sceptical towards Turkey and excluded it from the discourse on Europe. In the post-1999 period the Greek discourse on Turkey changed and represented Turkey as pluralistic and able to change, together with a closer identification of Greece with Europe and European norms and values. In Turkey a similar discursive shift took place, and the tension between the construction of the EU as both an aspiration and a threat started to change, and the positive identification with the EU (that is its aspiration) became dominant and gained prevalence over the discourse of threat. The author argues that Turkey's new identity as an EU candidate allowed for acceptance of European norms that included the requirement for cooperation with its neighbours and fixing the problem of border disputes. Another

[44] B. Rumelili (2008), 'Transforming the Greek-Turkish conflicts: the EU and 'what we make of it' in T. Diez, M. Albert, S. Stetter (eds) *The European Union and Border Conflicts: The Power of Integration and Association*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.94-128.

result of this discursive change was the construction of Greece as a model for Turkey on its journey towards EU membership.

The study demonstrates how the EU played an important role in the relations between Greece and Turkey where the collective identity of 'Europe' functioned as a reference point for the reconstruction of the two countries' identities. The discourse on Europe has reconciled two conflicting identity discourses in Greece and Turkey, where European Greece and non-European Turkey were reconstructed into European Greece and Europeanising Turkey. This development demonstrated the discursive change from radical otherness to non-radical otherness and implications for policy and relations between the two countries. The role of the EU was crucial for the change that took place because it functioned as an actor with authority that had the capacity to influence discourses of national identity in both countries. The case study demonstrates the complexity of the othering process and the variety of discursive positions that are crucial for the change from radical to non-radical otherness.[45] Rumelili's work serves as a good example for further research to be conducted in this area, both in terms of theoretical development and empirical analysis.[46]

Moving away from the EU to the wider international community Helle Malmvig discusses the way that sovereignty is constructed and practiced in international politics in different political contexts.[47] In *State Sovereignty and Intervention* her poststructuralist analysis of the relationship between sovereignty and intervention uses case studies of Kosovo and Algeria to demonstrate how different discursive constructions of sovereignty directly influence political decisions related

[45] Rumelili addresses regional organisation and identity building in detail in *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia*. She focuses on the European Union and ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and looks into the way that community-building on this scale constitutes relations of identity and difference among states, and shapes their conceptions of self and other. She claims that these relations have a great impact on conflict and cooperation, and analyses the discursive practices behind them. B. Rumelili (2007), *Constructing Regional Community and Order in Europe and Southeast Asia,* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke and B. Rumelili (2008) 'Interstate community-building and the identity/difference predicament' in R. Price (ed) *Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

[46] Another author that addresses identity and policy relationships who is worth mentioning in this context is O. Barballushi. In her work the author studies Albania and changes in foreign policy discourse and the identity construct of Albanianism and how the two relate. See O. Barballushi (2010), *The Politics of 'Euro-Atlantic Orientation': Political Identities Interests and Albanian Foreign Policy 1992-2007*, Ph.D thesis, University of Birmingham

[47] H. Malmvig (2006), *State Sovereignty and Intervention: A discourse analysis of interventionary and non-interventionary practices in Kosovo and Algeria*, Routledge, London and New York

to international conflict about whether intervention is possible in a particular case. The main theoretical question of the book is regarding how practices of intervention and non-intervention rely on and constitute meaning to state sovereignty. Malmvig looks at the way the conflicts in Kosovo and Algeria were discursively constituted: ethnic tensions and violations of human rights between the Serbs and Kosovars in the case of Kosovo, and the problem of Islamic fundamentalism in the Algerian case. The comparative study shows how sovereignty and (non) intervention were mutually constituted in the two cases.

In Malmvig's book the role of the other is present as one of the elements that determines relationships between political actors, although her main research focus is on the discursive construction of sovereignty and its implications for political action.[48] However, the Algerian case reveals in rather explicit terms that the way an other is constructed makes all the difference to a number of political processes. Malmvig's study focuses on the question of military intervention and under which circumstances this can be justified. When comparing Kosovo and Algeria, their geographical characteristics immediately send a message: one is in Europe, the other is not. These geographical characteristics, as we have seen in Rumelili's work, tend to be related to a number of discourses, which include culture and politics.

As the study shows, the Algerian case was discussed as a potential Islamic threat, a combination of terrorism and fundamentalism as a response to the country's political and economic crisis.[49] This discursive move is not neutral: it is closely connected to security questions and the political situation in Algeria was immediately seen as a threat both to the secular Algerian state and westernised Algerian people and to the Western world. However, the reason why military intervention was not the result of Western debates, according to Malmvig, is that the conflict in Algeria was seen as taking place between the government and the Islamists. Western intervention would have disregarded Algeria's democratically elected regime and would have implied support for Islamists and their presumed anti-Western agenda. This

[48] See chapter 4 for a discussion of the discursive reconstruction of sovereignty in the Croatian context of cooperating with international institutions.
[49] Malmvig (2006), op. cit. p. 110

illustrates the complexities of trying to define the self-other relationship, particularly for outside actors with only a partial understanding of the context.

Malmvig's discourse analysis revealed that Algeria was articulated as a democratic, open and pluralistic community; it was referred to as a whole, a unified subject speaking with one voice. However, at the same time this was combined with articulations of massacres, people living in fear and the presence of fanatical extremists. By drawing on poststructuralist theory on self and other, Malmvig argues that the Algerian society could only be portrayed as plural, tolerant and free by articulating "fundamentalist terrorism" as the other. Through a series of discursive practices "fundamentalism" was articulated as a radical other, a threat to Algeria and its identity. Malmvig proceeds to demonstrate how "fundamentalist terrorists" were differentiated and excluded from the Algerian community, and then describes how this other was articulated as a threat.[50] By being geographically located within Algeria but possessing characteristics that were the antithesis of Algeria and its people, the Islamists were constructed as an internal radical other. The analysis shows that dialogue was excluded as a possibility with this radical other and that imagery of war and conflict was invoked in relation to them. Islamists were articulated as a subject that is not rational and not capable of change, which was further reflected in the development of the discourse of threat and danger in the political discourse of the international community.

In the case of Kosovo the process of othering took a different direction. Milošević was represented as the sole acting subject who had unlimited power and who was responsible for genocide. Subjects of his illegal rule were referred to as the people of Serbia (both Serbs and Kosovars), but it was Kosovar Albanians who were the victims of genocide and ethnic cleansing. This demonstrates two distinct ethnic groups with distinct roles in the conflict. At the same time differences and conflicts between these groups were downplayed; they were both victims. The main divide was between the ruler – Milošević, and his people. Discourse on the Balkans as a place of inherent hatred and nationalism, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapters, was replaced, in the case of Kosovo, with a discourse on

[50] For a detailed account see Malmvig, op. cit. pp.151- 154

Milošević as the sole responsible perpetrator of violence, separate from the people who were discursively constructed as victims. This common identity of Serbs and Kosovars allowed for an articulation of a multi-ethnic community that shared a wish for democracy, pluralism, tolerance and coexistence.[51] In this way we do not encounter an other present in the construction of community identity as in the case of Algeria, but rather the other was one person who had turned against his people. It is thus possible to analyse the Kosovo case as one where the community has potential to fulfil its true identity, a case of self-realisation, in contrast to the case of Algeria where the Islamist threat to Algerian identity had to be eliminated.[52]

The studies discussed in this section demonstrate the relevance of studying identity in the wider field of international cooperation. Collective identity building and the question of cooperation, both within the context of regions and individual states, has been shown as closely related. The relevance of the process of othering was again confirmed to be central to these studies, and important theoretical implications were discussed. Radical otherness and difference had a prominent place in the above studies, both in terms of empirical analysis and theoretical insight. Rumelili's work especially contributed to the development of theorising on that topic and offers a good model to be followed in terms of conceptualising the problem of identity. The following chapter will discuss in detail how theory can be put into practice and in doing so it will summarise the knowledge gained from all the authors mentioned above.

The relevance of the above studies for the work undertaken in this dissertation is evident in the relationship between politics, geography and identity. Geographical characteristics are discursively linked with national, regional and civilizational identity in the Croatian case. The problem of defining the borders of "the Balkans" and "the East" resemble the above discussed Western criteria of determining the level of Europeaness in its neighbours and the possibility of becoming more like Europe through processes of interaction. My analysis of Croatia

[51] For a more detailed account of the process see Malmvig, op. cit. pp.85-94

[52] For a further discussion of the relationship between security discourses and self/other relationships with the context of the European Union see H. Malmvig (2004) *Cooperation or democratisation? The EU's conflicting Mediterranean security discourses*, DIIS Defence and Security Studies working paper, Danish Institute for International Studies, Denmark

will fit with the above studies regarding the link between the construction of an other and the success of political initiatives. In its own particular way my study will contribute to the discussed work on demonstrating the role of the other in the way political actors interact on the international stage.

Furthermore, the study of Croatia will add to the existing work on the interconnectedness of spatial, temporal and ethical process of othering, elaborated by Hansen. Although it is not always explicitly stated, all the studies analysed in this chapter to some degree demonstrate a close relationship between spatial and ethical elements of the othering process. The relevance of geography thus features as a great example of such theoretical insight, and allows us to take a close look into the politics of space and its relationship to identity construction in international politics.

After having discussed some of the relevant literature in the field and its theoretical and empirical contribution in terms of informing this thesis I will now turn to the process of othering and the question of what happens when self and other become linked in unprecedented discursive ways.

2.5 Reflexive communities in transition: the process of othering and identity construction

> *'Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.'*[53]

Discussing identity and political actors has so far been focused on several cases where an actor was defining its identity in a context that included an antagonist, or an 'other'. That relationship to a degree defined the subject in its rejection of certain identity features and thus served as an integral part of the process of identity construction. It is now necessary to look more closely into this process

[53] W. Connolly (1991), *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY

and to pinpoint some key elements within and apply them to the broader question of identity formation, as well as the topic of the study.

The process of identity building is best analysed in terms of the process of 'othering' because it allows us to look beyond the mere subject and to include a number of actors that are in a relationship with the subject. 'Othering' distinguishes between the 'self' that is the subject of analysis, and the 'other' - an outsider against whom the self identifies. As I argued previously, identity needs other subjects in order to be formed because self-formation is essentially about learning from other actors and it happens through a process of socialisation. The subject requires other subjects to know what it is and to know what it is not. Identity is therefore always relational which suggests that othering can be both negative and positive, depending on the relationship between the subjects of analysis.[54] Traditional approaches to studying identity maintain that through repeated encounters with otherness our own identity is reinforced and the other being constructed in a negative way is most common in such work.

The criteria by which communities understand the world are particular and tend to differ among various groups. They construct discourses about themselves which regulate the ethical norms of that particular group. These norms sometimes develop a taken for granted status and become difficult to question – they acquire the status of hegemonic discourses. In order to reach such status they can rely on myths (narratives about the subject), symbols (charging objects and events with particular significance) and rituals (collective action that generates solidarity).[55] In the Balkans the following perspective can be applied:

> Identity politics is always and necessarily a politics of the creation of difference. One is a Bosnian Serb to the degree to which one is not a Bosnian Moslem or a Croat…What is shocking about these developments, is not the inevitable dialectic of identity/difference that they display but rather the atavistic belief that identities can be maintained and secured only by eliminating difference and otherness.

[54] G. Schopflin (2000), *Nations, Identity, Power*, C. Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, p.480
[55] G.Schopflin, *Nations, Identity, Power*, Op. cit. p.480-1

> The negotiation of identity/difference…is the political problem facing democracies on a global scale.[56]

This question of negotiating identity will be analysed in detail in the following chapters and the way that otherness is constructed will be at the centre of that analysis. It is crucial to understand this dynamic and to question the way discourses work and how identity develops in changing political circumstances.

An emphasis on the linguistic element in a poststructuralist study reveals that ideas, norms and identities are all a part of discourse and cannot exist separately of one another, as I have argued previously. From this follows that language is central to our knowledge of reality and to our knowledge of who we are. It does not serve as a mirror of nature or some objective reality that exists out there and waits to be discovered but rather it is only possible to perceive reality through linguistic construction, as well as further deconstruction and reconstruction.[57] Analysing the discursive construction of norms and values and relating them to the discourses of identity of political actors such as states exposes a very close relationship between these concepts. The power of discourse is such that it forms our conceptualisation of these phenomena rather than it being a question of description. Political developments are therefore observable to us within specific discursive contexts and we can interpret them within the given discursive framework.

There are several strategies of constructing self and other in international politics.[58] They include:

• Representing the other as an existential threat through a speech act of securitisation.

• Representing the other as inferior.

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[56] S. Benhabib (1996) 'The Democratic Movement and the Problem of Difference' in S. Benhabib (ed.), *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the Boundaries of the Political*, Princeton NJ, Princeton University Press

[57] T. Diez (1999), 'Speaking…Europe: the politics of integration discourse' in *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 6 no. 4 Special Issue, Taylor & Francis Ltd

[58] T. Diez (2005), 'Constructing the Self and Changing Others: Reconsidering 'Normative Power Europe'', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, Vol.33, No.3, p. 628

• Representing the other as violating universal principles by setting the standards of the self as universally valid, with the consequence that the other should be convinced or otherwise brought to accept the principles of the self.

• Representation of the other as different. This strategy differs from the previous three because it does not place a value judgement on the other that is essentially hostile. This strategy is not completely innocent but unlike the other three reduces the possibility of legitimising damaging interference with the other.

The third strategy outlined above, that represents the other as violating universal principles, has so far been used by the European Union in relations to its others. The European practice is perceived to be the desired standard for others to follow. The Copenhagen criteria that set up the political, economic and administrative standards for EU membership provide an excellent example of this strategy. The EU has defined within these criteria what it is or what it aims to be and accordingly what the candidate countries should become. In other words the European Union has been represented as a normative power.[59] Ian Manners introduced this concept in relation to the EU and defined it as a power that is neither military nor purely economic but one that works through ideas and opinions. The discursive construction of the European Union as a normative power is a precondition for other actors to accept it as a normative authority and to accept the norms the EU promotes, and to impact what might appear as normal in global politics. This discursive construction also builds a particular sense of the EU's identity, while at the same time attempts to change other actors through the spread of its norms.[60] The EU candidate countries are put in an inferior position and will remain there until they fully take on the obligations and criteria as well as particular discourses associated with the EU. Although it is questionable whether the EU works as a unified actor and whether it holds a distinct identity, this assumption does exist in some political discourses and it has considerable power, which is the case in Croatia.

59 I. Manners (2002), 'Normative Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms?', *Journal of Common Market Studies,* Vol. 40, no.2, pp. 235-58
60 Diez, *Constructing the Self*, op. cit., p.614

In the case of the European Union and its near abroad the transfusion of a norm from one actor to another involves the interaction between these actors' identities and the norm in question. The problem of protecting minority rights first entered the national debate in Croatia as a question of ethics, in the sense of questioning the ethicality of the demand to protect some, (Serbian) national minorities whose home country was Croatia's enemy in the past. The change of the understanding of both the nature of minority protection and the Serbian Other made it possible for the debate to continue on European terms. Accepting these terms and identifying with them was what made Croatia receive approval from the EU, which consequently helped the process of legitimating them at home. Thus, the way these actors perceive their particular conceptions of the self and how this self relates to the other actor determines to an extent the outcome of the transfusion of the norm.

Again, change is possible if meaning is not eternally fixed and if points of dispute between various discourses change.[61] Shifts seem most probable if there is a considerable overlap between the two discourses in question. On the basis of such similar languages the alternative is not automatically rejected and opens up the possibility of change. The way identity relates to this claim is that when an actor perceives another actor to be similar to itself it is more likely to accept the discourses of the other and to find ways to identify with it. I will elaborate more on this point in the analysis on Croatia and its identification with the Western world.

It is important to note at this point that identity construction does not revolve out of a single self-other dichotomy but as a number of different combinations and relationships arising out of processes of socialisation.[62] Because there might not be only one endogenous dominant self-other relationship when we look at data over a number of studies, scholars like Campbell, Connolly and Hansen theorise that identity does not have to be constructed through so-called *radical otherness*. They suggest that identity of the subject can thus be constructed through a variety of actors that can have different degrees of otherness. An actor can define itself as radically different from another, but at the same time perceive itself to be not as different from someone else. It is possible to interpret the discourse of 'returning to Europe' of

[61] Diez, *Speaking…Europe,* op. cit. p.607
[62] Hansen , *Security,* op. cit. p.37

Central European states as an example of such a complex web of identities, where the new states perceived the Western European self to be superior to them but at the same time similar to them. It appears that temporal and spatial dimensions of identity construction were at play in that case and that 'Europe' was in any case not radical but rather very close to the searching Central European identity.[63]

In a similar way, the Croatian search for its 'true' identity as a Western European Country features the same tendency to articulate itself as being the same as the other (European Union) in terms of 'naturally' belonging there, but at the same time is divided from it through self-confessed differences. The other is here viewed in positive terms – the European Union which is superior to Croatia. This case demands an explanation of this rather unorthodox articulation of an other that is positively constructed, and thus runs contrary to traditional understanding of the process. The European Union here functions as a discursive community that brings together actors whose identities are not the same but the actors in question are nevertheless connected through a number of nodal points that structure the European discourse. The EU thus has the potential discursive power to reconcile difference and to deeply influence both its members as well as other states that wish to join them. Examining the process of adjusting the identity and policy discourses on the Croatian political stage and the change in the status of Croatia's others is the central concern of my discourse analytical approach.

Such an understanding of otherness as being both positively and negatively constructed has moved away from a traditional understanding of the process of othering that assumes a more radical difference between the subject/self and the other. The possibility of having a range of actors with a different degree of otherness has broadened the understanding of the relationship between identities and political action. Hansen's work remains one of the few that address this question and this thesis seeks to fill this gap by looking at a context in which a radical other changes and reaches a point when it can turn into a non-radical other. Neumann's study of Russia has hinted at this scenario but has not gone deep enough into the subject

[63] I. Neumann's work on 'the East' in European identity formation examines the role of a temporal other. See I. Neumann (1998), *Uses of the Other: 'The East' in European identity Formation,* University of Minnesota Press

material and leaves us without a satisfying account of possible developments. A detailed analysis in the following chapters will reveal the stages in discursive changes regarding the particular self-other relationship in the Croatian context and will also address the theoretical implications of the findings.

2.6 Concluding remarks

In this chapter it was argued that poststructuralist theory holds specific ontological and epistemological assumptions that challenge traditional, rationalist-empiricist views of the social world. As such it has the capacity to offer scholars novel ways of approaching and studying the political realm and in doing so it introduces the concept of discourse. The chapter has discussed some basic precepts of poststructuralist thought, with a special focus on identity and its importance for conducting a poststructuralist analysis.

Introducing the Copenhagen School of Security Studies has allowed us to broaden the thinking on identity and to place it within empirical studies whose main focus is international cooperation and identity construction. In this way some shortcomings of the Laclau and Mouffe theorising were highlighted and an alternative understanding of subject identity has been looked at.

Poststructuralism seeks links between concepts that are central to a specific discourse and it analyses them in terms of nodal points and signifiers that organise a discourse. Identity is here understood in the same way and the study of national identity in Croatia is closely related to political questions that were central to the country at the time of study. Special attention was given to the process of othering and novel ways of studying relationships between the self and other that depart from traditional understanding of other as being radically different from the subject of analysis.

Having set out the main concepts of poststructuralism and having discussed identity construction, we now have tools at our disposal for the study of Croatian

national identity in a changing political context that requires redefinitions and reconstructions of both the identity and political concepts that are central for the case study. In the following chapter I shall set out the methodology I will use in the analysis of changes of Croatian identity and discourses concerning the ICTY and minority rights question, so as to prepare for the analysis of actual texts.

3 Texts in contexts: Discourse analysis as poststructuralist methodology

3.1 Introduction

The term discourse analysis refers to several distinct ways of analysing text that is often used in poststructuralist research. It can be used with several types of data: written, spoken or performed. Discourse analysis is best understood as an umbrella term for analysis of text that has a common epistemological and ontological foundation. Language is at the centre of this approach and the main differences relate to different connections assumed to exist between the social realm and language. The basic difference between discourse analysis and other kinds of data analysis lies in the concepts that are used, the epistemological foundations, and ultimately, the type of questions that *can* be asked accordingly.

This chapter will set out the way in which poststructuralist theory can be applied to the question of changing Croatian national identity. It seeks to connect the theoretical discussions with the process of conducting research and applying discourse analysis to data. Section 3.2 introduces discourse analysis and discusses its epistemology and ontology and what that implies for analysis of data. Section 3.2 discusses discourse analysis as a method, the choice of texts, the question of their reliability, some challenges in conducting discourse analysis and reflects about the relationship between the researcher and their project. The last section discusses the case study, the choice of materials to be analysed and elaborates in detail the entire process of data collection and analysis.

3.2 Discourse analysis as a method of analysing text

As I have elaborated in the previous chapter, a poststructuralist study begins with language and its role in the constitution of meaning. What this generally implies for conducting research is that we need to look at texts and the way they fit within the wider social and political context. In this thesis discourse analysis is used in order to show how the discourse of Croatian national identity developed in the context of increased cooperation with the European Union. Discourse analysis approaches texts on a level that goes beyond description and process tracing and in this thesis it is used to explore discourses on national identity that have developed in the process of Croatia's adaptations to the EU membership *acquis* and on the new meanings that emerge out of that relationship and dictate the understanding of the European norms regarding cooperation with the ICTY and minority rights protection. Poststructuralist scholars argue that institutions cannot exist outside discourse. [1] This area of study has traditionally been examined in terms of tracing processes and underlying mechanisms of action that normally remain at the level of studying the institutional structure. A strong emphasis on language in terms of conducting discourse analysis of different texts offers an opportunity to engage with norms and values essential for the subject under study with even greater reflexivity, and to get a more complex view of social action.[2] In *The Archeology of Knowledge* M. Foucault wrote: 'We must question those ready made syntheses, those groupings that we normally accept before any examination, those links whose validity is recognized from the outset'.[3] He argued for the necessity to look into the ways of how meaning is produced and reproduced over time in specific contexts. Making use of his insight would allow us to understand the nature of the knowledge of phenomena apparent in this study.

Discourse analysis must be compatible with the theoretical framework. It is not just a tool for analysing data but a part of certain epistemological positions about

[1] T. Diez (1999), 'Speaking … Europe: the politics of integration discourse', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4
[2] Ibid.
[3] M. Foucault (2002), *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Routledge, London and New York, p. 31

knowledge. Poststructuralism and discourse analysis depend on philosophical premises (epistemological and ontological) about the role of language in the construction of reality, and on methodological guidelines for building a research design, as well as on more specific techniques of analysis.[4] In poststructuralist discourse analysis theory and method are intertwined and thus basic philosophical premises that underpin them must be accepted by the researcher when approaching an empirical study.[5]

The method of discourse analysis aims to find structures and patterns in public statements that regulate political debate.[6] It explores specific discursive constructions and how they arise from particular social and political contexts. It is focused on language and the way 'objective truths' are constructed in society, which in turn shape our perception and understanding of reality. In this way certain things can be said and are considered meaningful and true, while others are perceived as meaningless or simply less reasonable and as a consequence less powerful.[7]

Despite the similarities and a shared epistemology different poststructuralist strands differ on the topic of the scope of discourse analysis. They diverge on the question of whether discourses constitute the social complexity, or are themselves partly constituted by other aspects of the social.[8] The most frequent distinction is usually placed upon the differences between critical discourse analysis (CDA) that looks strictly into text and considers it as a part of the social whole, and the strand that maintains that the whole of society and social action is discursive action, and that there is nothing outside discourse.[9] In this second version power relations in society are investigated and normative perspectives reformulated, from which a critique of such relations can be made with an eye on possibilities for social change.[10] In this type of poststructuralist discourse analysis the focus of study is concerned with a larger context, often referred to as 'culture' or 'society', where the

[4] L. Phillips and M.W. Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, Sage Publications, London, 2006, p.4
[5] Ibid, p.4
[6] O. Waever, 'Identity, communities and foreign policy', in Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver (eds) (2002) *European Integration and National Identity*, Routledge, London
[7] Waever, 'Identity, communities and foreign policy', op.cit. p. 199
[8] Phillips and Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, op. cit. p.3
[9] E. Laclau and C. Mouffe (1985), *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Verso, London
[10] Phillips and Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis*, op. cit. p.2

analyst looks for the relationships between language and different social processes and activities.[11] The aim of the analyst here is to identify patterns of language and related practices and to demonstrate how they constitute various aspects of society.[12] This approach is thus concerned with the socio-historical nature of society and seeks to study realities that have gained a taken for granted status. An analysis performed in this way studies relationships of power as well as contested discourses and instabilities in meaning within them. It is this relationship that makes discourse analysis more than just a study of language: the whole of the social practice is thus incorporated in the analysis. For practical matters it is not possible to study the whole of society and to precisely mark its borders, but it is important to be aware of the width of the study and to look into as many levels as possible.

We find that the focus of this type of a study is often on identities and political action and their mutual constituitivness, as I have elaborated in the previous chapter. As argued previously, language is not referential and descriptive but has a constitutive role, while the term discourse refers not only to language but the whole of society. It is this approach that I use in this thesis in studying the wider Croatian setting. My outline of a civilisational discourse (chapter 4) is crucial for the two case studies since it provides a context for Croatia's discursive constructions, without which it would not be possible to critically engage with the changes in its political identity and the way Croatia interacts with the European Union, as well as with its neighbouring countries. These levels of analysis will be further discussed later on in this chapter as part of the research design section.

Researchers working in the poststructuralist tradition do not aim to capture the truth of reality but to offer an interpretation. The researcher is thus looking for patterns in the data but is not entirely sure what these will look like or what their significance will be. The analysis involves going through the data over and over

[11] The focus of analysis can vary considerably, depending on the type of discourse analysis. Sometimes the focus is language in order to discover its variations and how these variations are related to different social settings and institutions. Another approach focuses on the act of speaking: it is language as a process, talk, interaction between actors. This approach studies patterns in speech. The third approach in discourse analysis looks for patterns in language that are linked to a specific topic or activity. Thus we have studies on nursing, education or family. For a more detailed discussion consult Wetherell et al. (2003), op. cit.

[12] M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, S. J. Yates (2003), *Discourse as Data: a Guide for Analysis*, Sage Publications Ltd, London, pp. 7-9

again. As possible patterns emerge, it is useful to note them but to continue searching. Eventually there will be a range of possibilities to explore further. It will almost certainly be necessary to focus on some at the expense of others, leaving unfinished avenues for later exploration.[13] It is thus impossible to exhaust data and the variety of meanings within, and to 'complete' the analysis once and for all.

Discourse analysis and identity

When identity is investigated in discourse analysis, the starting point is to identify which subject positions (individual or collective, depending on the study) are relevant in the discourse. That can be done by looking at the nodal point around which a specific identity is organised. That can be, as used in my previous example, 'teacher', 'brother' or 'Scottish'. The following step is to look into the way that the nodal point is filled with meaning relationally, by being linked positively to some signs, and the way it is differentiated from them through other, opposing signs.[14]

Concepts of self and other, as I explained in chapter 2, are central to poststructuralist discourse analysis. They are closely linked to the concept of identity, through which we can make further links with political action as a venue where identity is played out. Discourse analysis identifies terms that reveal unambiguous constructions of the self and the other such as 'evil', 'good', 'primitive' or 'advanced', to name a few. One should be careful not to allocate just one sign to self and one to the other because the relationship between the two is never so simple: they exist within a complex network of identities. What this means in the context of this thesis is that Croatian identity is not just constructed as 'Western European', 'democratic', and 'advanced', but also as 'not Balkan', 'superior to Serbia' and as 'non violent'. Each of these signs can be further linked to other signs, until a complex web or relationships is established.

[13] Wetherell et al., *Discourse as Data*, op. cit. p.39
[14] L. Hansen (2006), *Security as Practice*, Routledge, Abingdon; see also Phillips and Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis*, op. cit. p.45

What is required is looking into how identity is constructed by positioning signs within the discourse and how they achieve stability in that process. It is important to look into its relationship with other signs in the wider context and how that relates to the concrete policy. These processes of linking offer a methodological means for an empirical analysis and enable the study of discourses, how they achieve stability and subsequently instability, the means for the deconstruction of discourses and processes of change. For purposes of the feasibility of a study it is necessary for the analysts to establish boundaries around the field that they research. In doing so the analyst must be aware of these limits and ought to be able to justify why one path was taken in the analysis rather than the other.

As discussed previously, discourse analysis is closely connected to the theoretical approach employed in this thesis. It is a methodological tool used for analysing text, rooted in the same ontological and epistemological assumptions about the social world. Discourse analysis is more than a study of language: it incorporates the whole social practice. With discourse analysis we aim to study the realities that have gained a taken for granted status and are understood as natural in a particular social setting. When discussing the subject of the study – Croatia, it is important to clarify what 'Croatia' means and how that features in this thesis. Poststructuralist approaches hold that identity and political action are mutually constitutive. Speaking and doing are inseparable, and language is understood to have a constitutive role, rather than a descriptive one. It follows that when we engage in discourse analysis we interpret both the linguistic and the social levels of the case study and look at the way policy and identity are intertwined.

Traditionally, the identity of a political actor, which is the state in this context, has been taken for granted, as I discussed in the previous chapter. What a state is tends to be fixed in a number of theoretical approaches, and the unit that is the state is normally a starting point for analysis. The state so defined has a number of intrinsic properties, such as sovereignty, foreign policy, and political culture, among others. In this view a state has a specific identity that distinguishes it from other political actors and it is possible to analyse it in a certain way and to place it in a specific place on the grid of international politics. However, poststructuralist

discourse analysis questions these basic assumptions about the state as a political unit and looks at the problem from a very different perspective due to its particular ontological and epistemological positions. Discourse analysis looks at the process rather than the end result, and how a state acquires its defining characteristics. In the context of this thesis the question is not who or what Croatia is, since that is not an ontological possibility to start with, but rather *how* Croatia is. In other words, discourse analysis will reveal how the Croatian state has come to define itself in a certain way and why. The study of Croatian identity then becomes a study of a process. What we will learn from it regards the way a number of actors interact in the changing political setting that requires adapting to new requirements and new interpretations of what constitutes Croatia.

To talk of identity of a political actor can potentially be misleading because using this term can suggest fixity, an assumption that identity exists as something unchanging. This would be contrary to poststructuralist principles and therefore it has to be stressed that when we speak of identity we imply that although a certain degree of fixity exists, there is still a vast range of openness and potential for change. Change is always assumed in this kind of work, and when we look at the identity of a particular actor we are aware that such a thing as identity is possible in a given point in time, and that it will continue to change. This is in line with one of the main poststructuralist assumptions that meaning cannot be fixed, as discussed in more detail in the previous chapter.

To sum up, knowledge about identity means focusing on the process of how a specific identity is discursively constructed or reconstructed. To 'know' what Croatia is becomes a problem of finding how discourses operate within the discursive field and in what way one articulation becomes temporarily fixed. Or in other words: how it becomes a hegemonic discourse. In this way we never leave the realm of interpretation and never exhaust possibilities that a particular context possesses.

Related to this epistemological question of what and how we can know something in poststructuralist research is the question of the relationship between Croatia's self and its various others, and what we can know from that relationship. Traditionally, difference was emphasized in the study of identity, and it was common

to establish this difference in terms of radical otherness, as discussed in the previous chapter. In this way boundaries were drawn between the subject of analysis and its others and the identity of the subject was then analysed in terms of difference from the other (or more others). This type of study departs from the self-radical other dichotomy and looks into a range of otherness in terms of degree, as well as othering within the subject along the temporal and ethical dimensions. In this way we are facing a different dynamic when analysing data and are led towards different discoveries than what can be found in traditional approaches to the study of identity. Poststructuralist work that engages with a range of otherness demonstrates that difference matters in the subtlety of degree, and that sometimes this difference is more a question of similarity between the subject and the other. This allows for a more positive relationship between the two.

It is here that another poststructuralist principle becomes crucial for the understanding of identity and the process of othering. Poststructuralism rejects causality in identity construction and suggests that the process should be looked at in light of mutual constituitivness instead. Discourse analysis focuses on the discursive practices of the subject in relation to an other(s) and in the context of this thesis, this will, among other things, reveal how the other is discursively constructed in a particular setting. Consequently, if we are committed to the principle of mutual constituitivness, we will be aware of the impact of othering on the identity of our subject. This means that through the process of othering what the subject says about the other will reflect back on the very identity of the subject. While engaging with the other, the subject (or the self) will at the same time develop discourses about its own identity that are closely connected to discourses on the other. Since the other cannot be excluded from identity building of the self, but is central in that process, it follows that the two processes will be closely linked. In reality we will encounter a number of others and a variety of othering processes, as this study will show. It is here that we can learn more about the relationship between the self and the other, and enrich our knowledge about identity construction. For example, the temporal othering of the Croatian state reveals how the present identity is constructed through the othering of the Croatian past, as will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

This awareness will help the researcher to carefully examine data and look for a number of clues when engaging with discourses. Understanding othering and the self and other relationship as a mirror image between the entities will allow for a more complex study and deeper understanding of the phenomena in question.

3.3 Designing a research project and conducting the analysis

In this section of the chapter I will discuss several aspects of conducting discourse analysis that are relevant for this thesis, and link them to the wider epistemological foundations of poststructuralist theory, discussed in the previous chapter. I will discuss my choice of data, justify the selection of texts and discuss some of the difficulties in accessing data that I encountered. I will also address some common questions regarding the reliability of poststructuralist analysis and suggest an alternative way to assess the value of the discourse analytical method and its contribution to the field. The last part of this section will engage in detail in the process of analysis, from the first stage of data collection to the final result.

The underlying idea about conducting a discourse analytical study suggests that methodology can be understood as following a set of rules and justifying one's choices at every stage of analysis.[15] In this way the very concept of methodology does not compromise the poststructuralist position that is anti-positivist, but offers a way to apply its concepts to an empirical case study in a systematic way. The following discussion will address the question of research design and data analysis, looking both at the theory behind it and its practical execution.

[15] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit.

Defining the study and establishing boundaries in a research project

This study of Croatia analyses the official government discourse.[16] Official discourse can be defined as the discourse through which state action is legitimised, and thus it is crucial for understanding political and social relations within and beyond state boundaries. The analysis in this thesis is directly based on official policy discourse and centres on political leaders who have official authority in decision-making, and on those involved with executing these policies such as diplomats, military staff and the judiciary, as well as heads of international institutions. This framework allows us to study the constructions of identity within official discourse, to analyse the way in which intertextual links stabilise this discourse, and to examine how official discourse encounters criticism. The study only discusses oppositional discourses when they are explicitly addressed in responses by politicians. Therefore, the aim of this study is not to map the degree of stability of the official discourse within the larger sphere that would include the opposition and public opinion, but is concerned with the articulations of Croatian identity at the official level.

The question that can be raised is what benefit there is at studying the official discourse when poststructuralism cannot actually prove that it is enough for the wider society to accept certain political changes. It can be suggested to look at public opinion in order to see whether the government discourse has been accepted by the public and to what extent. The answer to the first question is that poststructuralism indeed cannot prove that the official discourse is enough to understand political changes in a certain country and that there are many other actors at play and a number of other features that are important for the social and political life of a given country. However, given the size and scope of a doctoral dissertation, it would be

[16]Hansen offers three intertextual models and their research agendas. The second model broadens the analytical scope beyond the official discourse. The most important discourses that can be studied within this model are those of political parties, the media, and corporate groups. Model 3 expands its analysis even further to popular culture, or material that is concerned with policy but occupies a marginal status (NGOs, for example). The three models thus provide different venues of political debate, different actors and different genre. For a more detailed discussion see *Security as Practice,* op. cit., chapters 4 and 5.

impossible to include everything in a research piece at this level. Boundaries have to be drawn in every research endeavour and it is never possible to draw a line and claim that a topic has been completely analysed and that there is nothing left to study. Even if a study of the official discourse included aspects such as the opposition and public opinion there would still be unexamined features to the topic and material to yet be look at. Such a scenario would bring us back to the question of establishing parameters and whether what has been examined was enough for the question to be answered. It is reasonable to assume that a study would benefit from including other elements such as the discourse of the opposition or public opinion, but that would require a research project with a wider scope and perhaps more importantly a different research question that would require these elements to be incorporated in order for the question to be successfully answered. I argue that in the context of this thesis these additional elements are not necessary and that the question of Croatian national identity can be adequately answered by looking at the official discourse alone because the main research question concerns the articulation of Croatian national identity at that level. Including other elements into the analysis could be done in the future in order to broaden this study and discuss a number of questions that are related to the present study and so bring forth new insight.

This brings me to the second point regarding public opinion and why it was not included in the analysis. Alongside the problem of space and scope of analysis, the role of public opinion in the Croatian context in the time of study is quite specific. This thesis looks at radical political changes that occurred with the change of leadership in January 2000 that had far-reaching and deep consequences, both for Croatia's domestic and foreign policy. At this time the country still functioned under the remnants of the previous regime and was slowly getting used to the changes that occurred. The civil society was largely undeveloped at the time and had little, if any, influence on the political matters. Looking at the newspapers of the time and the way things were discussed reveals that political questions studied in this thesis were directly shaped by political actors. I argue that the topics under study represent a straightforward top-down development where political elites shape politics which then gradually find its way down towards the public.

Another observation that contributes to my position is the very nature of presidential and parliamentary elections of January 2000. As discussed in chapter 1, the case here was that the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) lost the elections, rather than the coalition of six parties won. This difference might seem obscure and irrelevant at first glance, but it does deserve a closer look. Chaos and increased loss of popularity of the HDZ, together with the rapid deterioration of Franjo Tuđman's health and imminent death opened up the opportunity for the opposition to unite and defeat the HDZ in a joint effort. The six parties that formed the winning coalition were willing to forgo differences in order to form an alliance that would get them to power. The very fact that the coalition included six political parties allows us to assume that their political goals were not particularly sharpened and clear, and that victory over the HDZ was their primary goal. Events that soon followed testify to this conclusion, namely two parties leaving the coalition due to internal conflict and difficulty in finding common ground. As the analysis will demonstrate in the following chapters, much of the new political agenda was not well received; much of it was controversial and encountered protest from the public. As it will be discussed in greater detail in chapters four and five, these issues were directly imposed by the European Union and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and as such present politics at the level of the elites, rather than something that is shaped at the level of the public and finds its way up through various ways of agenda-setting.

To sum up, expanding a study beyond the official discourse would require a research project on a larger scale, as well as a different research question that would include a study of a wider social and political setting. Including public opinion in analysis is useful if we are to look at a wider stability of a particular discourse over a period of time, or it should be a case when public opinion plays an important role in political agenda setting. I have discussed the Croatian case and argued that it is reasonable and justifiable to focus on the official discourse in this thesis. Including other elements, such as public opinion, is both not necessary and not feasible in this instance given the focus of the inquiry and Croatian circumstances of the time. Having discussed this aspect of the study and the reasons behind omitting something that may seem like a reasonable requirement, I now proceed to engage with the

choice of data, the subject of the study and the process of data collection and analysis.

Selection of texts, the subject, and the time of study

The selection of texts used in discourse analysis should follow the same principle of keeping with the poststructuralist theory. Hansen suggests that the analyst needs to establish links between individual texts and a wider network of meaning in order to remain faithful to the link between language and the wider social sphere.[17] Then a number of subjects ought to be identified, as well as a number of events one wishes to study in a given time period in order for boundaries of the research project to be set. Hansen advises that material should be chosen according to two sets of considerations. First, the majority of texts should be taken from the time under study. Second, the body of texts should include key texts that are frequently quoted and thus function as nodes within the intertextual web of a debate, as well as a larger body of general material that provides the basis for a more quantitative identification of the dominant discourses. A good discourse analysis requires knowledge of the case in question, which comes from reading a wide body of texts that cover a longer period of time. Knowing a language does not only mean being able to speak and read, but it also includes knowledge of the wider social setting as well as language codes. This type of knowledge enables the analyst to engage with a specific meaning in a given context and to go deeper into the material.

According to Hansen, selected texts should follow three criteria: 1. they should be characterised by the clear articulation of identities and policies; 2. they are widely read and attended to; 3. they have the formal authority to define a political position.[18] As will be shown, these criteria have different analytical and methodological strengths. Clear articulations make it possible to discursively analyse

[17] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit.
[18] Hansen *Security*, op. cit. p. 85

the texts. Texts that are widely read help us determine which discourses are dominant based on the importance they are given, and formal authority is related to positions of power in a given context. Ideally, all of the criteria should be incorporated in an analysis but that is not always possible. It is because of that difficulty in securing ideal data that several types of texts should be included in the study in order to secure clear articulations of identity and policy, to be expressions of formal authority and to meet the criteria of the text being widely read. In this way all three will be covered although sometimes only two or even one will be explicit, but the discursive connections between them will allow us to establish these links and thus to fulfil the criteria.

Poststructuralist discourse analysis gives epistemological and methodological priority to the study of primary texts. They include statements, speeches and interviews in the case where one studies the official government discourse. I refer to these sources as official statements in the analysis as they represent the official discourse that is being studied. The two terms are used interchangeably in the following chapters. In poststructuralist discourse analysis it is not usual to conduct interviews in a study of this kind. My argument against such practice is based on the problem of researcher's involvement in producing their own data, since an interview is a direct form of interaction. Apart from this general principle there are two other reasons why I did not conduct interviews personally and chose to rely on different sources. Since the study examines the official government discourse that would require access to politicians and diplomats at the highest level. Access to them would be extremely difficult and would surpass the available connections and the time framework that I had at my disposition at the time.[19] Also, several key figures have died since the events studied, which adds to the difficulty.

Another reason against conducting interviews in this particular setting is that a significant amount of time passed between the events under study and my data collection that took place between July and October 2007. Talking about the events that took place 7 years before would require the interviewees to discuss the past and the result would be a retroactive description of events. Even if the interviewees told

[19] I attempted to get in touch with two former ministers and a senior diplomat but without success. I will discuss these difficulties in more detail later on.

the truth about their involvement in those past events and were happy to account for details in the political processes, the temporal distance would inevitably cause them to filter their account due to a new political circumstance, their career development, new political climate in the country or simply their memory of events could inadvertently have changed and thus provide data that is not completely accurate. It would be different if data collection took place at the time of occurrence of certain political events because in that context there would be no danger of retroactive description. However, a number of other problems could easily arise that would put the reliability of the data into question. For example, the interviewees could answer the questions with the intention to embellish past events, to justify their own involvement or of their colleagues. The interviewees could also respond in a way that they assume the interviewer wants to hear. Interaction between the interviewer and interviewees could also play and important role and we can assume that the rapport would also influence the outcome of the conversation as well as the atmosphere during the interview.[20] For these reasons I argue that conducting interviews for this study would not have been helpful because the data would perhaps not fully satisfy the requirements that are needed to adequately examine the processes at the time of study.

In order for the researcher to avoid these particular difficulties and uncertainties about the quality of data, poststructuralist scholars tend to rely on sources that were documented at the time when the political events in question occurred. The texts chosen for this study have been gathered from newspapers and the discourses analysed represent the official government discourses on cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the minority question, that address a deeper problem of Croatian national identity. There are several reasons for choosing newspapers as the source of data in this study. Newspapers were chosen primarily because they contained official statements at the time of events analysed in this thesis. These texts represent the views of state leaders

[20] For an in depth discussions of interviewing consult R. Yin, (1993) *Applications of case study research*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing and (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.) Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publishing; N. Blaikie (2000), *Designing Social Research,* Cambridge, Polity Press

and diplomats and are taken from the time period of the study.[21]Another important reason is that they were the main source for the publication of official statements that was widely available to the public. The newspapers thus present public articulations of the politicians at the time. In this way they fulfil the above requirements of representing the official discourse that clearly articulates identities and policies, of being widely read and the speakers hold positions of authority.

An objection that can be made at this point is that what was printed in the newspapers was not necessarily accurate and that we encounter interpretation on the side of the journalists. To adequately answer to this objection it is necessary to clarify that the study does not analyse editorials and articles that describe the events in question. The only data that is used are actual statements from politicians and other official figures. What particular journalists add to those statements is not taken into consideration at any level of analysis.[22]

Another criticism of this approach concerns the quality of data since what is published is always reduced and we do not get the entire statement, even with long interviews. I agree with this objection and understand that indeed we are dealing with selected texts that have not been published in their entirety. For example, a journalist or an editor has to make a decision what to include in an article because they are restricted by space and the amount of text that can be included in their article. In this way we do not get the entire statement given at a press conference and must rely on what has been edited out of the whole statement. This does affect the quality and reliability of data and is a limitation that researchers encounter. In order to overcome this difficulty as much as possible I looked at a number of different newspapers and through triangulation of sources compared the statements that appeared in respective articles.[23] This allowed me to identify relevant events and to double-check the quality of the statements. All of the events that I address in this thesis were covered by all of the newspapers that I consulted. This testifies that the events were indeed relevant

[21] It is important to note that this is not a study of media, and newspapers are not used with the purpose to discuss the way political events were understood at the time on a wider scale, or to analyse discourses of public opinion, a point I addressed earlier.

[22] I have read a wide body of literature and a number of different sources in order to get a better understanding of the events in question. However, personal opinion of journalists did not qualify and was not used to assess the relevance of data. In this way I tried to avoid this additional level of interpretation and to refrain from making judgements based on such debates.

[23] R.Yin (1994), *Case study research*, op. cit.; N. Blaikie (2000), *Designing Social Research,* op. cit.

and that they deserved to be addressed and reported to the public. Looking at several different newspapers also helped me to find statements that were least edited and thus presented direct quotes by relevant speakers. Some of the newspapers included only a sentence or two of the direct quote and based the report on the discussion by the journalist. Some only summarised what was said, without including the actual text. Such sources were not very useful for the actual analysis of texts and do not feature in the thesis, although they were important for supporting the reliability of other sources that were included in the final analysis. Some newspapers tended to include longer quotes in order to present the official position.[24] In this way I could compare a number of sources in order to check the reliability of official statements and could choose the quotes that had the highest amount of text included.

Another objection that could be made concerns difficulties in conducting discourse analysis on written text that makes it difficult for nuances in the discourse to be captured and adequately analysed. This is a valid observation that calls into question the quality of interpretation and as such needs to be examined. I argue that it is the type of discourse analysis and the research question that requires one to focus on this element in varying degrees. If the research focus was on the micro level of language and critical discourse analysis was employed, then nuances in discourse would be of utmost importance. The rhythm of speech, pauses, the tone and all other aspects of speaking would be central in this type of study and thus would require the researcher to pay special attention to all the details that are not available in written data and are only available in live interviews.[25] If the research project was looking at the meso level and was studying variations within a discourse then this aspect of speaking is not so relevant, unless the focus is on the way different actors speak in different contexts. This also depends on a research question.

In this study the focus is on the level where discourses are not merely the technical aspect of language and what and how things are said, but the study of links between language and the wider social sphere and the way that the two are connected. For this purpose I argue that it is not necessary to look at the details of the

[24] For example *Jutarnji List* had the best quality of data and thus I quoted its texts most often in the final analysis

[25] For an example and further discussion of this type of analysis consult R. Wodak and M. Meyer (eds) (2001), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, Sage Publications Ltd, London

way actors speak, but rather at the content of their statements. Looking at the way certain discursive configurations work within a wider discursive sphere and how that is reflected as well as constituted in language is the focus of the study.

However, another layer of interpretation is required in discourse analysis and that is where nuance plays an important role, albeit in a different way. The manner in which things are stated and discussed in interviews does allow the researcher to get a sense of how the interviewee feels about the topic; it becomes obvious what is a difficult subject, what should be avoided in the discussion or what the speaker wants to stress as important. A great deal of information is available in this way and it allows the researcher to go deeper into the material and to bring this information into the analysis. Written data does not provide this in the same way and the researcher has to use a different set of skills for understanding the material. As I argued previously, a wider range of knowledge is required for good analysis and it is not enough to speak the language to be able to produce a good piece of research. It is relevant that the researcher understands the subject of analysis more broadly, which includes history, politics, religion, social relations and culture, among other things. By being familiar with these elements, the researcher knows how to approach the material, which clues to look for in studied discourses and how to interpret them.[26]

The intricacies with discourse analysis entail that what is not said sometimes has equal value as what is said. This is a very interesting feature that can produce relevant findings, but can be difficult to grasp if the researcher does not recognise the gaps and voids in a discourse. It is here that nuance is crucial and that the researcher must rely on subtleties of language to discern the meaning of what is being said. For example, there are several quotes that are used in the following chapters where the speaker does not explicitly name people he refers to but does so in a way that is more subtle and that relies on common knowledge of the audience. Thus we often encounter expressions such as ‘those people’, or simply ‘those’ when a speaker discusses a sensitive topic and wishes to stress his disapproval or even contempt for the people in question. Naturally, it is not possible to immediately assume that the speaker expresses disapproval or contempt simply for their choice of words. This

[26] This is closely related to the question of researcher’s role in the analysis and is something I will address in more detail later on.

interpretation relies on the wider knowledge of the subject and the reading of a number of texts. In this way the researcher does not rely on one statement that is isolated from the rest of the material but works with a whole field of meaning and the complex relationships between discourses. My interpretation that a speaker expresses contempt for his political opponents is thus based on knowledge of the topic and being familiar with a number of texts that allow for this particular interpretation. Certain topics, motifs, expressions and images have been encountered in different contexts and from different speakers which makes it possible to establish a pattern of meaning. Repetition and placement of specific discursive constructions in speech allow us to recognise their specific meaning even when it is implicit or completely missing in certain instances. There have been examples of this in the analysis chapters when a topic is avoided to the extent that it is not mentioned although it is obvious from the wider context of the statement or interview that the topic is very much present. Awareness of the existence of these gaps is crucial to conducting good discourse analysis as it reveals the meaning of discourses on a deeper level.

Therefore, I argue that it is possible to discern nuance in discourse even when working with written data if the researcher is capable of bringing together several levels of interpretation, which further relies on the researcher possessing enough knowledge about the case that will enable him to understand the material at a deeper level. I will return to this question later on when discussing the analysis section in order to clarify further the process as well as to point to the data itself.

This last claim further poses the requirements for reliability of the results of the research project and for assessing the claims that the researcher makes. In order to assess whether something is a good piece of research there are always criteria that have to be met. However, given the nature of poststructuralist enquiry that rejects the very idea of proof within the social, the criteria are different for judging the quality and relevance of such work from those that are normally applied to mainstream social science.[27] As discussed previously, this can present a problem because there are no strict guidelines for determining the reliability of work in a traditional sense,

[27] For a more detailed discussion of these criteria consult Yin (1994), *Case study research*, op. cit; Blaikie (2000), *Designing Social Research*, op. cit; and M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, S.J. Yates (eds) (2003), *Discourse as Data*, Sage Publications Ltd, London

but there are ways of establishing criteria that can help us make assessments in this area of study.[28]

Reliability of analysis would ideally be comparable to other studies that would then support the claims made in this particular piece of research. As argued previously, the reliability of sources was established by the variety and number of sources used in the analysis and the reliability of interpretation on the whole is similarly linked to data and the way it was analysed. The problem in this particular study is that it was not possible to compare the results because there were no other studies of Croatia on a similar topic. This study covered a number of sources that addressed historical and political circumstances of the breakup of Yugoslavia and the Homeland War in order to provide a wider framework for analysis. Those studies occasionally touched upon the questions of Croatian national identity but did so without a deeper insight into the process of identity building or a closer study of the development of nationalist discourse over time.[29]This study in a way stands alone with its research focus for the time being and complements other work on Croatia already done. It is thus difficult to measure its accuracy by comparing it to other studies but on the other hand this piece of research is innovative and provides new insight about the subject.

This research has relied on a number of studies on national identity and the self – other relationship specifically, and it is thus possible to compare its findings to those sources. In this way it is possible to check the reliability of the study and its results. Differences are obviously due to their own socio-political contexts but the insight the study provides follows the logic of explanation found in the works of Neumann, Waever, Hansen and other authors discussed previously, as well as some of their conclusions about identity building and self and other relationship. The quality of this piece of research is thus assessed partly on its own, without direct

[28] L. Hansen (2006), *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War,* Routledge, London/New York; D. Howarth, A. Norval. Y. Stavrakakis (eds) (2000), *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis*, Manchester University Press, Manchester

[29] See D. Jovic, (2001), 'The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A critical review of Explanatory Approaches' in *European Journal of Social Theory,* Vol. 4 No.1, Sage Publications; London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi ; Jović, D. (2003), *Jugoslavija: država koja je odumrla,* Prometej, Zagreb; S. Malešević, (2002), *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia*, Frank Cass, London and Portland

reference to similar studies, and partly based on studies conducted on different subjects. Its internal structure and cohesion of argument is crucial for assessing whether the final findings are credible and to what extent they offer a contribution to existing work on identity and the process of othering.

Narrowing the focus of the study and selection of articles for analysis

The situation in which Croatia found itself offers good material for analysis since it allowed for a wide range of discursive constructions that are not normally possible under other circumstances in more democratised societies. It is precisely these articulations that challenged the established discourses that are the main focus of this study. The analysis focuses on the discursive strategies employed by the political elites in their attempts to reconstruct the entire political sphere, and the way the relationship between signifiers and nodal points developed.[30] Identity construction and policy discourses are identified through texts, both spoken and written. These texts revolve around common themes and are bound together by a smaller number of discourses.[31] The way we identify particular discourses depends on the way we theorise all of our choices during the analysis that directly influence the selection of material and the discourses that emerge. Hansen suggests that it is useful to focus on several discourses in order to analyse challenges to the hegemonic discourse or because of the possibility to analyse it in a comparative perspective.[32] Such *basic discourses*, as I will refer to them from now on, are structuring discourses and are identified through readings of a number of texts. They provide an analytical lens through which a multitude of different representations and policies can be seen as systematically connected and that they identify the key points of structuring disagreement within a debate.[33]

[30] However, this does not mean that politicians were not faced with resistance and challenged to justify their moves. Reading of the wider material whose texts are not included in the analysis demonstrates that there has been a debate outside the official framework.
[31] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit. p.51
[32] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit. p. 52
[33] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit. p. 52

In this study it is what has been identified as a 'civilisational discourse' that performs this function. As I have stated previously, discourses on cooperation and minority rights are analysed through the lens of a civilisational discourse of 'West vs. East'. The civilisational aspect allows a study of both cases as separate but profoundly connected at the same time. Croatia's developing Western identity and desire to completely disassociate itself with the Balkans and the Balkan practice are present in both case studies and lead to interesting findings. Studying the discourses of cooperation with the ICTY and minority rights question through the civilisational discourse takes the entire study to a wider level that grasps the level of text, the national level, as well as a civilisational one. In this way the study demonstrates the ability of discourse analysis as a method to engage with concrete policy questions whilst paying special attention to the context in order to examine how they interact and influence each other.

The texts selected for the analysis are interviews with high ranking politicians and diplomats, excerpts from their press releases, public statements, speeches and their published written material. They have been gathered from several newspapers and weekly publications. The newspapers include *Jutarnji List, Novi List, Slobodna Dalmacija* and *Vjesnik.* The criteria of selection included the extent of their readerships, the geographic spread to cover the whole country[34] and to represent a broad spectrum of editorial and ideological positions.[35] The weekly publications include *Globus, Nacional* and *Feral Tribune* which at the time supported the new government and were highly critical of Tuđman and his legacy.

Poststructuralist discourse analytical study does not have clearly defined requirements about the number of texts being analysed. This methodology is not quantitative and rejects the idea of proof being in the numbers. Depending on the type of work in question the analyst must decide on the number of text that will be included in the analysis and that will cover all the agreed upon requirements, rather

[34] *Jutarnji List* and *Vjesnik* are widely read throughout the country. *Novi List* is the local newspaper of the Kvarer region and is widely read in Istria and the Gorski Kotar region, *Slobodna Dalmacija* is the most read newspaper in the whole Dalmatian region.

[35] *Vjesnik* was a pro-HDZ paper throughout the 1990s. In 2000 it remained faithful to the party's position and represented the official voice of the government opposition. Both *Jutarnji List* and *Novi List* are in full support of the new government's politics, while *Slobodna Dalmacija* is positioned somewhere in-between.

than relying on a fixed number of texts. The entire analysis has been conducted on 140 texts. The chapter on the civilisational discourse and radical other is a result of an analysis of forty texts, while the chapters on ICTY and minority protection of fifty each. It should be noted that not all hundred and forty texts have been included in the final versions of analysis chapters. The main reason is the restriction of space and practicability. However, the chapters are results of the analysis of all hundred and forty texts, as well as other background reading of various literature, such as history book, editorials, and TV programmes.

Texts that have been included in the chapters have been selected on the basis of their quality over other texts and in terms of their diversity in order to satisfy the requirements discussed earlier. For example, since all the texts have been gathered from widely read papers and represent the official discourse, these two important requirements have been met. Naturally, not all of these texts address the question in the same way. When analysing the civilisational discourse many texts did explicitly articulate the identity constructions and relationships between the self and the other. The reason for their inclusion in the analysis was their clear articulation of one of those features, their reference to other texts or expression of ideas that have later on been reproduced by other speakers.

The texts chosen for analysis address important and often controversial issues. The topics were covered in all daily newspapers and appeared in the weekly publications as well. My choice of one source over others had to do with the quality of the published article, which primarily means the amount of original text included in the piece. The chosen text was compared to the version in other sources in order to establish the level of overlap between them and potential differences. This comparison served as a type of proof that the text was indeed faithful to the speaker's position and their spoken words.

This study revolves around a single subject: the Croatian state. However, this single subject is further analysed along the temporal/historical perspective. Such a historical perspective and comparison with the contemporary subject and its identity gives the study a comparative perspective. The relationship between the self and the other again becomes very important here. As I stated earlier, the other can be

articulated as superior, inferior or equal but different. Croatia's two principal others can be defined as the Balkans/Serbia which were constructed as inferior, and the West/European Union as superior to Croatia at the time of study. However, given the split between the past and present in Croatian identity (before and after the elections of 2000), another other can be added – Croatia's own past. The complexity of the situation offers a fruitful study of the interplays between identity and Croatian politics at the moment when Croatia's identity was intensely re-articulated along the Western European discourse.

This study does not seek to compare the old Tuđmanist discourse and the post-election discourse. The Tuđmanist discourse is present in the analysis mainly through the new official discourse, or in other words, it appears as a *representation* of Tuđman's discourse. The study is not interested in the accuracy of that representation, but rather with the role that Tuđman played in 2000 in the process of othering of Croatia's recent past. Equally, the same principle applies to Serbia. Croatia's construction of Serbia as a radical other was not something that resulted from their dialogue. The period of study contained no Serbian sources that would discuss the relations between the two countries. Serbia only started to speak at the Zagreb Summit. It can be argued that the Homeland War was perhaps the best example of the two countries 'talking' to each other, and that the self-other positions were cemented during that time. The analysis was conducted under that notion.[36]

The temporal perspective is equally important in the discourse analytical study. It is possible to focus on one particular moment, or to examine a case study through a longer period of time. Discourse analysis can be used to study how identities are implemented and put into practice in negotiations with international institutions, or on a local level.[37] Studies of more than one moment range from comparison of a smaller number of important events. Hansen suggests that the moments in this type of a comparative study should not be too far apart as to risk making comparisons difficult or revealing little information. Comparison in itself is interesting, but it is the development of a discourse between two or more points in

[36] I want to stress at this point that there has never appeared a report of the way Serbia defined the war. In the Croatian discourse it was always assumed that Serbia was leading an expansionist war.
[37] Hansen , *Security*, op. cit. p. 78

time that is the focus of analysis in this case. In this sense, my study is not a historical one that focuses on Croatia's negotiations with the European Union and the change of its relations with Serbia, but a study of Croatia's changing identity in new political contexts.

The period of time that this thesis investigates stretches over one year. I consider this period to be one 'moment' but it is further divided into several sub-moments. The sub-moments are as follows: parliamentary and presidential elections in January 2000, changes related to presidential power in the Constitution and the debate on the nature of political systems, new regulations around minority rights, relations with The Hague Tribunal and the Declaration of Collaboration with the Tribunal, and the Zagreb Summit in November 2000.

The decision to focus on the period of time that stretched over one year was made on the basis of importance that that particular time frame presented. In this immediate post-Tuđman period we witness radical political changes and a completely new direction that the new government took. Many reforms and changes were embarked upon in that year, and although most were not finished and required a longer time frame in order to be completed, they represent the intention and the new direction in the Croatian political life. It is of equal importance to note that the discourses that developed at that time essentially stayed the same in the following years. The reading of material between the period of 2000 and end of 2003 witnesses to that, as well as following of contemporary debates in Croatian politics.[38]

The analysis is divided into three main parts. The first data analysis chapter investigates the civilisational discourse of 'West/EU' vs. 'East/Balkans' and the nature of the Serbian radical other. As I have noted, the civilisational discourse functions as a basic discourse in which the two case studies are discursively rooted. It works as a wider discursive context in which the identities of civilisation are constructed and are closely linked to the discourses on the national level. The civilisational discourse provides a framework within which discourses of

[38] My initial intention was to study the period between 2000 and 2004. After much deliberation I decided to focus on the first year only in order to analyse the emerging discourses in-depth because they proved to be radical at the time and continued to develop along those line in the following years as well. Today's official discourse is very much in line with those positions developed in 2000.

democratisation, progress and de-Balkanisation are further linked to policy decisions as well as of fine-tuning of Croatia's changing identity. The radical other is in close relationship with the civilisational discourse because it provides a concrete subject (Serbia) that embodies the Balkan civilisation. The Serbian radical other is discursively constructed in the same way as 'the Balkans' and in the Croatian official discourse it is often explicitly stated that Serbia and the Balkans are essentially the same.[39] A special focus in the analysis is paid to the way that the radical other changes in the official discourse during the process of cooperation with the ICTY and through debates on minority rights.

The second data analysis chapter investigates the discourses behind Croatia's cooperation with the ICTY and looks into the process of Croatia's change of identity. The third chapter studies the discourses on minority rights protection. Both case studies are discursively connected with the civilisational discourse and the radical other, and the analysis seeks to point connections between all three. The process of establishing and analysing a basic discourse and its relationship with the case studies will be elaborated in detail in the next section of this chapter.

As discussed in the previous chapter, discourses organise knowledge in a systematic way and so define what can and cannot be said. All employed concepts and expressed ideas can only exist within discourse just as subjects do not exist outside discourse. They engage and contest each other by challenging policy, identity and the logic through which they are linked, and in doing so they often provide different readings of facts and events, especially as they develop over time. 'Key events' refer to situations where important facts manifest themselves on the political agenda and influence the official policy-identity constellation. Mapping debates around key events offers a methodological technique for tracing the stability of official discourse as they can be used to construct a timeline which in turn can be employed when empirical material is selected.[40] According to Hansen, the analytical advantage of studying several events within the same temporal period is to generate a better understanding of the discourses across politically significant areas.[41] This is

[39] Also, Serbia and Yugoslavia are often used interchangeably to denote the same subject.
[40] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit. p.78
[41] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit. p. 80

the main argument behind the use of two case studies in this thesis. Croatian identity is at the very core of both the ICTY and minority questions. Both cases demonstrate how Croatian identity as a Western and a democratic country has evolved and show its relationship with the civilisational discourse. The two studies address issues that might seem loosely connected at first glance; however, a detailed study reveals connections between the two that rest upon specific conceptions of what it means to be a Western European country. Furthermore, the reconstruction of the Serbian other is present in both cases, with different dimensions and roles.

As argued previously, facts are never 'out there', waiting to be discovered, speaking for themselves. A poststructuralist study is engaged in discovering how facts are created and how they are related to the policy/identity nexus. It aims to show how discourses present events in order to support or destabilise official policy.[42] In the Croatian case it is important to look closely into the construction of the nation and into the debate of whether a nation demands membership that depends on birth and lineage, or if it is a matter of openness towards new members who accept the political project in question.[43] It is worth quoting Stuart Hall here, who links this question to discourse: 'A national culture is a *discourse* - a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our actions and our conception of ourselves. […] National cultures construct identities by producing meanings about 'the nation' with which we can *identify*, these are contained in the stories which are told about it and memories which connect its present with its past.'[44]

These issues do not necessarily have to fit with a set of external criteria deemed to be objective but rather the focus is on the way the state perceives itself to be and how that understanding correlates to the foreign policy issues of the country. In the context of my research it means looking into ways that Croatia projects its own vision of self onto the actors that it engages with in important political matters and how this influences the political events taking place and concretely, what kind of policies this relationship generates.

[42] Hansen, *Security*, op.cit.p.32
[43] Weaver, op. cit. p. 35
[44] S. Hall, quoted in R. Wodak, R. de Cillia, M. Reisigl and K. Liebhart (eds) (1999), *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, p. 23

3.4 Data collection and analysis

The purpose of this section is to address the entire process of the study, from data collection to data analysis. The last section will discuss the problem of reflexivity and my own role as a researcher and my relationship with the subject material. As discussed previously, the methodology used for the study is closely connected to poststructuralist theory and thus follows from its epistemology and ontology. The theory, outlined in the previous chapter, always guides the research and provides a framework. Therefore, data chosen for the study has not been forced to fit with the theoretical assumptions, but rather it is the case that theory made it more clear what kind of data had to be looked for in the first place.

Studying official government discourse requires an analysis of primary material. The data was collected at the Newspapers Archive at the National and University Library[45] in Zagreb, Croatia between July and October 2007. I collected material about all aspects and problems of cooperation with the ICTY, such as war trials, negotiation problems, protests, discourses of the military personnel and of the opposition. The material on minority protection covered debates on citizenship and the Constitution, importance of sovereignty, the question of refugees and misplaced persons, and the position of Serbs as the biggest national minority in the country. I also collected material concerning the position of Croatia in the Balkans, relations with neighbouring countries, relations with Western European countries and its plans to become an EU member in the foreseeable future.

The first reading of the data was aimed at finding patterns in discourses on cooperation with the ICTY and the minority question, looking for the way things were constructed and within which particular contexts. I was also aiming to identify signifiers and nodal points that would structure my analysis. An additional awareness started to develop during this process: a distinctive emergence of the discourse of westernisation and de-Balkanisation. This discourse appeared early in the year 2000 in relation to the plans for future EU membership and Croatia's position and role in Europe. A parallel discourse about the Balkans was present and complemented the

[45] *Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica*

discourse on westernisation. It became increasingly obvious that this civilisational discourse was constantly present in the discourses on cooperation and minorities and that it provided a rationale for certain government steps, as well as playing a central role in Croatian identity reconstruction.

Identifying the civilisational discourse was crucial for the second reading of the data. The reading identified central discourses surrounding cooperation with the ICTY and minority rights protection through the civilisational lens. Articulations of identity and policy thus assumed a wider meaning that ranged from the micro level of the text, to the macro level of the social context. At this point a framework for analysis started to appear. A group of discourses was identified around each topic and a web of meaning was traced. The third reading of data isolated specific texts for analysis. Subsequent work focused on the three sections of analysis separately, bringing them together at the last stage. Given the structure of the overall study it was possible to separate discourses of civilisation, cooperation and minorities and to analyse them separately. In this way certain repetitions of discourses they had in common were more pronounced and so affirmed in their importance.[46] This feature is present in the final analysis of the study and certain discourses will appear in all three data analysis chapters. This repetition demonstrates the close link between them and the importance of intertextuality in discourse analysis. It also confirms the poststructuralist position that texts never exist in a vacuum but are always a part of the larger web of meaning and refer to other texts.

All analysis was conducted on the original texts in Croatian. When specific texts were chosen to be included in the chapters only then were they translated into English. Translations aimed to stay as close as possible to the original and to translate into English the meaning that went beyond grammar and syntax rules. In some occasions it was not possible to retain the meaning of the statement without including an explanation with more detail. Also, on several occasion it was impossible to translate certain concepts and a degree of improvisation and freedom in translation was required. Nevertheless, staying close to the original meaning was the

[46] For example, discourse on sovereignty appeared in all three section of the study and was identified as a nodal point during the analysis.

primary concern and all care was taken to bring all the texts of the final analysis to that level.

Difficulties in accessing data

At the planning stage of research design my intention was to also collect data from the Parliamentary archive in Zagreb[47] and use transcripts of parliamentary debates to complement data gathered from newspapers. In that way triangulation would have been achieved in order to check for the quality and reliability of newspapers. Also, additional information about the topics would have been available, as well as more insight into the interaction between politicians and a more faithful record of debates, without editing that is always present in newspapers.

The access to the archives seemed to be straightforward and open to the general public, as was stated on their website and repeated at the central office when I made the initial inquiry.[48] However, it turned out to be quite difficult in reality. When I arrived at the archive building I was told that it was quite unusual to have people other than journalists ask for access. I had a letter from my supervisor, Dr. Aspinwall, that supported my claim to be a PhD student and that my request to access the archive was for academic purposes. I was told to call the main office and to ask about what exactly I needed to get into the archive. In that following conversation I was told that I needed to submit a list of exact dates of debates that I was interested in and that they were available online. I tried gathering the needed information but at that time there were no details about the debates on specific dates and I had to rely on guessing. During my next call to the archive main office I was told that it might take a few days or even weeks for them to process my request, which was then denied in a conversation with a different person. All of this took

[47] *Arhiv hrvatskog Sabora*.
[48] The website www.sabor.hr includes details on Information Access and Rules on Public Access to Proceedings in the Croatian Parliament and its Working Bodies.

place over a period of two weeks and it made me realise that accessing the archives would be a serious difficulty.

I consulted with my supervisor, Dr. Annika Bergman at that point and discussed the situation. I was advised that I should look at the data already gathered in the newspapers archive and make a decision on what to do next: continue with trying to access the parliamentary archive or use what I had gathered. I spent several days going over the collected material and trying to assess whether I had enough to conduct analysis on them. Although I was concerned with having to change my plan I decided to use the newspapers as my source of analysis and to leave the parliamentary archive. I was confident that what I had would provide enough good material for my project.

My experience in trying to access parliamentary archives demonstrates that although the information is meant to be readily available to the public it is questionable how easily accessible the information is as compared to other western countries a researcher may not face as many obstacles.

Reflexivity in research

When assessing a piece of research the question of relationship between the researcher and the topic is often raised. Mainstream social science pursues the ideal of objectivity where the researcher is detached from the topic and thus is capable of producing research without bias. Poststructuralist scholars reject that understanding and suggest that the researcher is always present in the study and that as a consequence objectivity is very difficult, if not impossible to achieve.

This study is in many ways a personal story. I believe that is what makes it interesting and valuable to the academic circles, but it is necessary to clarify why that is the case and how such research can be credible. The question of epistemology is always central to any research project since it determines how we perceive the subject as well as how we understand facts. Since poststructuralism supports the idea

of a social construction of knowledge and of facts, this study inevitably must question its own position and how the role of the researcher has impacted the process of analysis as well as the final results. Phillips and Jørgensen warn that working with discourses close to oneself potentially makes it difficult to treat them as discourses, rather than a common-sense understanding within that particular context.[49] I argue that it is exactly these common-sense understandings and local knowledge that have to be analysed, for their taken-for-granted quality and apparent 'naturalness'. The analyst is thus a part of the process and what might appear as a problem to critics of poststructuralist discourse analysis is simply acknowledged by the analyst as an obvious situation, where every researcher regardless of their epistemological position or nationality is a part of their interpretation and understanding of data. This feature of familiarity and 'naturalness' of data is not only present in the analyst but in the very texts that are being analysed. For example, it is common to find in text that politicians refer to phenomena in a cryptic way. 'The region', 'those people' and 'our neighbours' might seem vague but the recipients of the discourse know exactly what and whom it is referred to. The meaning of the words is thus taken for granted on that level and it is the task of the analyst to shed light on the meaning of the concepts as well as the context in which they were articulated. Familiarity with the wider context and history, as well as knowledge of the language then becomes essential to the study.

The following quote explains the role of the researcher in a clear way and the relationship they have to their subject in the process of researching it.

> Reflexivity requires an awareness of the researcher's contribution to the construction of meanings throughout the research process, and an acknowledgment of the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' one's subject matter while conducting research. Reflexivity then, urges us to explore the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research.[50]

[49] Phillips and Jorgensen, *Discourse Analysis*, op. cit. p.21

[50] D.J. Nightingale and J. Cromby (1999), *Social constructionist psychology : A critical analysis of theory and practice*, Buckingham, Open University Press, p. 228

Since it is not possible to remain on the outside and to impartially observe and analyse political phenomena, we must first decide whether that is an impediment to good research and how that personal element features in the study. The most obvious place to start is to look at the link between the case study and the researcher. When a specific country is the topic the researcher either comes from that country or is a foreigner. Given that poststructuralism rejects the idea of objectivity in research, both cases will demonstrate a degree of bias, although in different ways. As discussed in the previous chapter, most of available literature on Croatia and the Balkans comes from abroad, especially from the English speaking world. As a consequence it inevitably conveys the attitudes and understanding towards Croatia that are largely influenced by local circumstance and culture. As such it portrays a particular picture about the topic that equally reveals interesting things about the authors and where they were coming from in their assessment of the case study. Some of the authors were Croatian but were educated abroad (their postgraduate work at least) where they continued their academic career.[51] We can assume with a degree of certainty that their work has been influenced by their academic environment and that their research focus and approach to studying Croatia differs from that of Croatian researchers.

My own position as a researcher in this case is similar to that of the Croats abroad. The topic of inquiry is my own country and as a consequence carries with it a certain amount of baggage. The events that took place in the 1990s and the period studied in this thesis directly influenced my life and greatly shaped my own attitudes towards my country, the Balkans and the rest of the world. The choice of the topic and the way I designed the research project were influenced by that as much as what I learned in the research design class. My personal views did greatly influence my choice of reading material in the initial stages of research and they placed me on the side of the new regime, with which I shared the same attitude towards the previous government and its actions.

[51] For example Jović, Uzelac, Malešević

However, the long process of data collection and analysis, as well as continuous reading of other kind of materials helped me see the Croatian story in a new light. A more critical stance towards the new government developed through this process, as well as towards the European Union and several other international organisations. A better understanding of political processes generally also developed and confirmed my understanding of the importance of domestic context and the interplay of different political spheres.

The growing awareness of the complexities of the Croatian case made me look more carefully into sources to be included in the thesis. I realised it was crucial to look at the case study from different angles and to be careful about the way I presented arguments, in terms of using certain language and tone. It is not possible to erase bias completely and the researcher is always embedded in the wider political and social discourse, but being aware of this issue and continually reflecting on the process of research and analysis makes it more likely for the researcher to produce work that is more than simply a manifesto of certain ideological propositions.

This thesis, although written from a perspective of someone who is a part of the culture of the subject of the study, offers a critical stance towards the events that took place and contributes to the existing work on both Croatia and the Balkans. In terms of 'foreign' academic work it adds a local voice and a perspective of someone on the inside. In terms of contributing to Croatian research, it brings something new and daring to the field. During the period of my work on the thesis there was nothing written on this subject in Croatia. As discussed previously, a handful of Croatian authors working abroad had looked into the questions of the Homeland War and its aftermath, but these topics were curiously absent at home. Main concerns in the Croatian academic circles in the last ten years mainly revolved around questions of the field of political research, distinguishing it from other social science and setting its boundaries. What one would rightly see as the most important thing to study was simply not there. Discourse analysis places equal weight on what is not said to that what is said and this interesting situation in Croatia invites us to look more deeply into the way that the subject of this thesis challenges local attitudes towards its history.

Discussing my work with other researchers working on Croatia I am confident that my study would not have been possible had I pursued a postgraduate degree in Croatia. Despite claims to openness towards the international academic world Croatia is still a captive of its own insecurities in terms of where it belongs in the world, which is reflected in its academic achievements among other things. In March of 2009 a group of lecturers and PhD students gathered in Stirling for a one day conference on Croatia in the post – Tuđman period. The result was an exciting exchange of knowledge and findings on a variety of topics, from politics, social issues and media to pop culture. Another outcome was a proposal to put together a publication of our work as examples of Croatian academic working in diaspora. In October of 2010 a special edition of a Croatian political journal *Politička misao* was published and presented our work to the Croatian readers.[52] It attracted a lot of attention and received much positive feedback. Initiatives such as this one will help establish closer contacts between Croatian researchers working at home and abroad and facilitate an exchange of views and experience. Addressing such sensitive topics that are still avoided at home and bringing a new perspective on things will benefit research and publications done locally and hopefully open the academic circle up to influences from abroad. Equally so, it might encourage them to start looking at domestic issues without fear of being deemed controversial or even hostile to our Country and its recent history.

Finally, it is important to reflect on the way that contemporary political discourse in Croatia is influenced by academic work. It is difficult to predict to what extent this study will impact the existing discourse in the long run, but we can assume with a degree of certainty that the very existence of academic work that seeks to understand these important questions at a deeper level and place them in a wider civilizational and political framework will allow for a development of thinking about Croatian identity. Engaging in debates about where Croatia belongs and how it should define itself in relation to the European Union and the Balkans by critically examining its past will help Croatia in defining and understanding its position in Europe and the rest of the world.

[52] My own article was based the chapter on minority rights protection and discussed the issue of sovereignty in contemporary Europe and Croatian difficulties with dealing with minorities.

4 Trouble with the Balkans: an analysis of the radical other and the civilisational discourse

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will introduce several important topics that are closely connected to the question of Croatia's changing political identity. It will set the scene for the discussion of co-operation with the ICTY and minority protection in relation to Croatia's changing identity that forms two case studies, analysed in the following chapters. Questions of Croatian identity and the role of Serbia, as well as the problem of the Balkans as a geographical and civilisational space will be addressed in this chapter in order to provide a context for the study of Croatian identity with regards to ICTY and for the question of ethnic minorities.

The chapter will first identify significant political events and connect them to the overall theme of Croatia's progress westward and the changing nature of its political identity. The othering of Croatia's past becomes central in the official discourse of the new government that seeks to completely change its political direction. The second part of the chapter will investigate a basic discourse that revolves around the concept of civilisation. This discourse is closely interwoven into all political action of the period studied, and will be looked at in detail in Croatia's cooperation with the ICTY and its approach to regulating minority rights. The analysis of this basic discourse will be conducted by focusing on Croatia's articulation of the 'West', its relationship with the Balkans and Serbia in particular. The concept of radical otherness will be addressed here in more detail and used to examine the nature of the Serbian other in the Croatian context. It will be argued that the civilisational discourse of the West/European Union versus the East/ the Balkans is the basis for Croatia's understanding of its position in Europe.

The nature of interpretive approaches requires a critical stance towards social facts and data and aims to reveal the way in which social facts are created and made

stable in a given discursive field. The case of Croatia and the Balkans is examined in the light of Croatia's democratic change and its connection to the questions of identity formation. The stress is on Croatia's relations with the West, most significantly the European Union, and on the way these concepts are constructed in the official discourse. The second important feature is the relationship with Serbia – the radical other that represents the Balkans that Croatia is eager to leave behind. The tension between the established discourse of anti-Balkan and anti-Serbian sentiment and the need to reconcile with them in order to be accepted by the West will provide the basis of analysis in the remainder of this chapter and in the ones that follow.

The link between the civilisational discourse and the two case studies is found at the level of Croatia's changing identity. Croatia has never defined itself as a Balkan country, and the elections of 2000 offered an opportunity to reinforce this view with successful foreign policy decisions and by taking determined steps towards EU membership. Political elites faced the problem of how to justify their views and decisions to the people who were at that point still divided on the question of how much was negotiable in order to gain the desired membership of the European Union. The civilisational question existed primarily at the international level, while at the domestic level it was gradually translated into a question of the concept of 'Balkan' being equated with Tuđman's stubbornness and narrow minded nationalism. Nobody at home had to be convinced that Croatia was not Balkan but a 'proper', Western European country. This discourse was embedded in the fabric of Croatian identity and was a widely shared belief among the population. Croatian identity as a western European country thus had to be made legitimate through acceptance of the western world, and specifically of the European Union. That was to be achieved by embracing Western European norms and putting them into practice. Reinterpreting concepts of democracy, responsibility and sovereignty and changing the attitudes towards minorities, as well as stressing the necessity of cooperating with the ICTY were some of the first things on the new agenda.

The next section will introduce the political events at the beginning of the year 2000 in order to set the scene and introduce some of the main concerns for the

new government. It will also help the reader to better understand the political climate in the country in the time of study and to perceive the analysed topics as being directly connected to Croatia's past and its problems with constructing and maintaining its political identity.

4.2 Setting the scene: a new political agenda in the post-Tuđman era

The beginning of the year 2000 witnessed a dramatic upheaval on the Croatian political scene. Franjo Tuđman's death at the very end of the year 1999 had significant effects, both in terms of political action and a more general atmosphere in the country. It was more than a question of change of power and an opportunity to move in a different direction. For many Croatians the event was understood as an end of an era. The whole of the following year was characterised by the new government's attempt to get away from the previous government's direction as much as possible, to build a dramatically different image for themselves on the international plane as well as at home, and to energetically embark upon reform and to accommodate EU demands that would eventually lead Croatia towards the long desired membership.

The parliamentary elections held on 3rd January 2000 resulted in the defeat of the HDZ - Croatian Democratic Union[1] to the coalition between the Social Democratic Party[2] and the Croatian Social Liberal Party.[3] The coalition won 71 out of 150 seats (46 %) while HDZ got 46 seats (30.46%). Together with a bloc of four other parties[4] a comfortable majority of seats was won which secured the defeat of the HDZ. The leader of the SDP, Ivica Račan became head of government.[5]

[1] Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (HDZ)
[2] Socijaldemokratska partija hrvatske (SDP)
[3] Hrvatsko socijalno liberalna stranka (HSLS)
[4] Hrvatska seljačka stranka (HSS) - Croatian Peasant Party, Istarski demokratski sabor (IDS) - Istrian Democratic Assembley, Hrvatska narodna stranka (HNS) – Croatian People's Party and Liberalna stranka (LS) – Liberal Party
[5] The Croatian name for this function is *premijer*, which would literally translate into 'prime minister'. Sometime this translation is to be found in English publications, but this thesis uses the term 'head of

The SDP-HSLS result was a triumph for the whole opposition and stood for an end of a dramatic era in Croatia's politics. The HDZ was suffering from internal struggles between the conservative and liberal factions and was trying to reorganise. Reasons for the downfall of the HDZ in the elections were considered to be manifold but two stood out: the internal crisis into which the HDZ had fallen during Tuđman's leadership and promises made by the SDP - HSLS concerning a radical improvement in economic as well as political matters. The anti - HDZ sentiment in the country was fuelled by the worsening of Croatia's international standing and reputation, the economic crisis and the level of living conditions, by obvious abuse of power by the ruling party and their inflexible rule. The support that the winning coalition got was perceived as more of a response against the HDZ than the result of their own political plan. The result of the elections was immediately followed by comments that focused on the need for the HDZ to reform, following examples of European conservative parties and to abandon the path promoted by Tuđman and his followers.

The focus of the winning coalition's programme was an improvement in cooperation with The Hague Tribunal, improvement of Croatia's international status and resuscitation of the economy. 'We are ready to be estimated by the European Union by what we do rather than on the grounds of what we declare', was one of Prime Minister Račan's early statements.[6] The programme of the government was explicitly promoted as being in complete accordance with the requirements of the European Union.

The presidential elections took place shortly after the parliamentary elections. On 24th January the results were in favour of Stjepan Mesić, an independent candidate and a well known figure on the Croatian political scene.[7] Mesić got 41% of votes and was followed by Dražen Budiša of the HSLS/SDP with 27.7% and the HDZ candidate Mate Granić with 22.47%. A second round of elections took place on

government' instead in order to avoid confusion with the meaning of 'prime minister' as used in the UK. This option is also used in translation into English.

[6] Ivica Račan, *Vjesnik*, 15th February 2000, my translation

[7] Stjepan Mesić was a member of the HDZ in 1990 and participated in the first multi-party elections. In the same year he became the so-called 'President of Presidency of Yugoslavia' (presidents of the republics took turns in performing the role of the President of the Federation). After Croatia declared its independence Mesić returned to Zagreb and in 1992 became Head of Parliament (Predsjednik Sabora). In 1994 he left the HDZ and started a new party, Hrvatske nezavisne demokrate – Croatian Independent Democrats and together with most members moved to the HNS in 1997.

7th February. Mesić won with 56% of the votes and became the second president of independent Croatia. The result of the election was completely unpredictable since Mesić announced his candidature relatively late and did not seem a serious contender during the presidential campaign. His independent status was perceived by many as a positive aspect due to the general loss of faith in political parties and mistrust in politicians and their incapability to bring about positive change in the country. Others however, regarded his position as weak and lacking in substance in relation to a definite programme and a more distinct political position. Mesić was aware of the attitudes and increasing media attention he was drawing and managed to sustain his image of someone who desires to be a 'peoples' president', distancing himself from Tuđman and his nationalistic rhetoric.

Mesić's victory was perceived by many as a definite blow to the old regime and the end of HDZ power in Croatia. His insistence on taking Croatia to Europe and promises of cooperating with the Government made a good impression on the international actors. Initial statements about immediate plans for action concerned changes to the Constitution and the need to decrease presidential power in favour of the Government. Mesić was open about his intent to cooperate from the start and supported the initiation for reform. In an interview given before the second round of elections, he discussed the constitutional changes and foreign policy direction. He described the presidential power during Tuđman as being wide ranging, which 'caused an inflation of extra-constitutional institutions' where 'all the power became centred in the president's hands'. 'President must be a co-creator of foreign policy and in our case I believe it is the president's job to provide initiative aimed towards state institutions that are primary decision-makers: the government and the parliament.'[8]

The quote directly addresses a distinction between Tuđman's understanding of the presidential role in a democratic state, and that of the leaders of the new regime that Mesić adheres to. The old way supported centralised power and the existence of institutions outside the Constitution, while the new forces promote balance and responsibility of institutions towards one another, supported by a clear

[8] S. Mesić, Interview in *Globus*, 15.02.2000, my translation

division of duties. In the following section I will analyse the debate in more detail and lay the grounds for the broader setting which is crucial for the analysis of the civilisational discourse. Looking at the specifics of the Constitution debate and extracting signifiers on which it rests will offer a fruitful basis for placing these specific political matters within a broader discursive field, which in turn reflected the discursive constructions of signifiers found in the analysis of the ICTY and the minority question.

4.3 First debates and political decisions: the Constitution and the question of government

The problems that the new Government and President decided to address immediately after the elections concerned the change within the Constitution regarding the presidential rule and the relationship with the Government. Two problems were put at the centre of the debate that were seen as having important consequences for the whole population of Croatia and that touched upon the very core of the identity of the Croatian state.

The first one was concerned with what should be done about the range of presidential power and the way it is defined in the Constitution, and what should be the domain of Government and what should be the domain of Parliament. The intention of changing the semi-presidential system into a parliamentary one was announced by the opposition during the parliamentary elections campaign. The plans for realisation commenced soon after the presidential elections took place. The opponents of the reform, on the one hand, expressed their fear that the parliamentary system would be slow in cases when rapid decision-making would be required and that Croatia could easily be destabilised. The supporters of the parliamentary option, on the other hand, blamed the semi-presidential system for the authoritarian style of Tuđman's rule. They put their faith in institutional changes expecting a radical move away from Tuđman and the HDZ.

One of the elements that featured in the pro-parliamentary system discourse was insistence that Croatia needed a leader that was not affiliated with a certain political party. The fear of the HDZ-Tuđman style of rule prompted many to press for a system that would not allow concentration of power in one person or a party. The semi presidential system was perceived to be an obstacle to any future political change if a parliament would undergo a process of shifting relationships between parties. Such a change would not effect the presidential term and would thus provide potential for tipping the balance in favour of one party. They claimed that a parliamentary system was better suited for countries in transition and especially those with pronounced regional and ethnic differences.[9] Mesić openly declared support for the change of the system and diminishing presidential power, which is demonstrated in the following quote:

> I will accept all constitutional changes that happen in the future because I want Croatia to become a parliamentary democracy, to have the parliament as the highest organ of power and thus a guaranteed division of power. In such a system the president would not be merely a symbol of power but a balancing factor in the workings of the state apparatus. The president's role ought to be to make sure that the Constitution is respected at all times.[10]

What is apparent in this text is the stress on the need to separate power in the state institutions. Balance was the key concept in the discourse and was linked to Croatia's aspirations to become fully democratic. The urgency with which the debate was put forward and the representation of the state apparatus as something that needs to be reformed suggests a certain amount of fear underlying the discourse. Unlike Tuđman, the new President supports the reasons for the diminishing of his authority for the sake of democratic principles. The following text shows that Mesić judged his predecessor in the light of not following such democratic principles:

> President Tuđman did not understand democracy; he did not believe in democratic procedures, he did not understand that procedure is a

[9] These debates featured in the publications examined for this study during that period of time, in the form of statements, interviews and editorials
[10] President Mesić, *Novi List,* 23.02.2000, my translation

> part of democracy. That is why he held on to his messianic role, believing that he knew what was best for the people, how institutions must work and that in that sense he was most competent to express his opinion on everything and to make all decisions. … I have had a very negative experience with the late President Tuđman. He harmed Croatia in the sense that his ruling style created a centre of power in his close surroundings. As his illness progressed more and more power was taken by an informal team of people that dragged Croatia away from Europe, the EU integration processes, European standards and criteria. Croatia was getting more and more isolated and those who did not care carried on looting it. Croatia simply did not function as a law-governed state.[11]

The text positions Tuđman's approach as diametrically opposite to the new government's understanding of democracy. Mesić positions the two camps in the following way: Tuđman did not understand democracy and saw himself as having a messianic role in Croatia, as opposed to the new regime that supports the development of democratic institutions and procedures and sees them as being intrinsic to the very nature of democracy. Furthermore, Tuđman put himself at the centre of Croatia and substituted all democratic workings with his own personal opinion on all matters. Mesić then emphasises the negative outcome of such power arrangements. What followed was a drifting away from democratic Europe and being caught in isolation, which resulted in the country being exploited from the inside and subsequently weakened. Tuđman's personification of Croatia with himself was thus in opposition to the institutional and legal aspects of the state, supported by the new power structures. This tension is further emphasised in the text when Mesić accuses a group of people who took over Tuđman's role in an informal way and took advantage of the situation for personal gain. Throughout the text the stress is on the mutually exclusive personal and legal, individual and institutional. Mesić makes a direct, intrinsic link between the personal power of the President and the damage of the state. Law and institutions that work on democratic principles are put forward as factors of stability and progress.

However, a debate on the nature of political systems developed further among politicians and academics that looked to challenge this emerging discourse. The main argument of this position was that generally, the type of system is not

[11] President Mesić, *Novi List,* 23.02.2000, my translation

necessarily connected with the way power is exercised within a given state. From that it followed that the way HDZ acted was not in a direct way connected to the semi-presidential system. What this discourse suggested was that what happened in Croatia in the 1990s was not in any case an 'ideal' model of a semi-presidential system but rather, an anomaly. The government never exercised its power but chose to be a kind of a spokesperson for the President, thus losing its purpose and its legitimacy as an executive power. Thus, the deviations of Tuđman's rule came out of a *Croatian* political practice, rather than the system being faulty in itself. The long period of communist rule and its centralised government shaped the political setting in Croatia to a high degree and the lack of civil society and the particular understanding of power made it possible for the semi-presidential system to be abused in an un-democratic way. According to this line of thinking we can conclude that it is the will of those in power and its acceptance of the citizens that determine the style of the rule, rather then the institutional structures. In other words, I argue that it is the discourses that operate within a given discursive field that set the boundaries of what is possible. The lack of civil society and the legacy of centralised one-party rule shaped the understanding of the Croatian public about what it means to be a democratic state and what the President's role should be, which in turn allowed him to freely exercise power without restraint and without a true sense of accountability to the people.

A question of sovereignty

The second issue that was debated at this stage regarded the way of defining sovereignty and statehood of Croatia and was closely linked to the discourse on the presidential system. Those who favoured a change in the definition of the Croatian state talked about 'eliminating the definition of Croatia as a nation state of all Croatian people' and that 'the Republic of Croatia will finally become a state of all

its citizens.'[12] In this case the debate was focused on two different understandings of a state, namely a 'national' versus 'civil' state. Politicians belonging to the winning coalition mostly supported the idea of changing the definition along the civil line argument.[13] For example, Vesna Pusić of the HNS[14] considered the proposal 'understandable and reasonable because most of the European countries had long ago abandoned the national definition of their states.'[15] Pusić explained in her statement that the idea of a nation state was historically justifiable since back then there was a need to define a nation in the first place and the nation state model was supposed to hold it in place. Such an understanding of the need to change was in line with the idea that processes of globalisation have made such definitions redundant and that defining a state in national terms is in fact in opposition to the whole purpose of integration.

Others expressed similar understandings about the nature of progress regarding the definition of a state. A civil variant was always stressed as a more modern, democratic, European one. Mato Arlović of the SDP stated that 'at the beginning of the 1990s when we were fighting for our independent and sovereign state it made sense to define Croatia as a national state of Croatian people. But after we have won the battle, such a formulation is no longer necessary.'[16] Both texts based their arguments on historical grounds. This particular discourse supports the understanding that in the past the nation state was necessary given the different nature of the world. The first text is rather vague about the specific time period in question when it comes to the international level, while the second text identifies the 1990s as being the crucial time for Croatia's state building process. Both position the nation state as linked to the past and call it outdated, while the civil definition of a state is constructed as modern and desirable.

Another feature that is important comes from the second text: 'after we have won the battle, such a formulation is no longer necessary'. The battle is the

[12] Mladen Pleše, *Nacional,* 22. March 2000, my translation
[13] The weekly paper *Nacional* conducted a survey among politicians and presented the findings in the 22nd March issue
[14] *Hrvatska narodna stranka* – Croatian People's Party
[15] *Nacional, 22.* March 2000, my translation
[16] *Nacional, 22.* March 2000, my translation

Homeland War, fought against Yugoslav forces and discursively constructed as a central feature of Croatian identity in the 1990s. Calling upon the Homeland War as a point in time when Croatia's circumstances changed makes it possible to argue for the need to look at other European states for inspiration. The war is here constructed as both victorious and finished, which allows the possibility to break with the past and turn a new leaf. In the following chapter I will return to the question of the Homeland War and look at the way it had to be rearticulated and justified by difficult decisions if it were to stay as one of Croatia's defining historical elements.

However, the question of changing the definition of Croatia perhaps needed a clearer debate given that the Constitution itself provided some interesting points. It stated: 'In the Republic of Croatia ruling comes from the people and belongs to the people who are a community of free and equal citizens.'[17] In this sense Croatia was defined in civil terms from its conception. All civil rights, freedoms and obligations were based on the understanding and defining of the citizen, and not on ethnic terms. The question of changing the definition of the Croatian state can thus be understood not as a question of legitimacy, but as a question of understanding one's own position in the 'modern, democratic West' and developing its identity accordingly. Opponents of the change[18] stressed the historical-symbolic nature of defining a state in a particular way but warned that because of Croatia's recent history and particular political circumstances, the definition really does touch upon of all important questions regarding the constitution of the Croatian political community and as such it can provoke misunderstandings and even conflicts. Having made considerable progress in making Croatia a real democratic country makes it unnecessary to dwell on issues of mythic origins and ancient histories.[19] In this way, a distinction was made between the Tuđmanist discourse on nationalism and the 'true' nature of Croatia, according to the written word of the Constitution.

The problem of reconciling the demands made by the EU and constrictions faced at home were soon articulated in the light of the sovereignty question. As I

[17] The Croatian Constitution, article 2 section 1, my translation
[18] Slaven Letica in his article 'Will the definition of Croatia as a nation state of the Croatian people really be changed in the Constitution?' in *Globus*, 24.3.2000. no.485 gave an interesting analysis of the matter
[19] Letica, *Globus*, 24.3.2000, my translation

argued previously, Tuđman's rhetoric equated the independent Croatian state with not being a part of Yugoslavia or any other regional association. Membership in the European Union was at times seen as a positive option but often as a threat to Croatia's independence and hard-earned sovereign status when conditions were imposed. The sovereignty question was used to legitimise the new Government's decisions and in return provided space to navigate the risky waters. The need to make Croatia into a law-governed state was linked to the sovereignty argument and turned the previous rhetoric of independence upside-down. Foreign Minister Tonino Picula insisted that:

> It is in Croatia's interest to be a law-governed state and that all criminal actions are punished at home, including war crimes. This ought to be for Croatia's own credibility. Many say that cooperation with The Hague puts Croatia's sovereignty in question. That is absurd because sovereignty is put into question when legal norms and laws of that well-established system are refuted.[20]

In this way the authority of the European Union and The Hague tribunal were positioned as unquestioned authority that has the right to grant or refute one's right to be called sovereign. The legitimacy of the Government and a new direction in foreign policy making were thus secured without the humiliation of acting against one's will. The reconstruction of the meaning of sovereignty will be addressed in greater detail in the context of cooperation with The Hague tribunal. The discourse on sovereignty is present in the minority protection issue as well, although to a lesser degree and is usually linked to the question of democratic practice of minority protection.

After having discussed several immediate concerns of the new government that direct us towards a deeper understanding of the changing Croatian identity and its relationship with political questions, I will now turn to the problem of political space and discuss its implications for the civilizational aspect of Croatian identity debate.

[20] T. Picula, *Novi List,* 11.03.2000, my translation

4.4 The civilisational discourse and the radical other: what does 'the Balkans' really mean and where can it be found?

Discursive constructions of 'the Balkans'

Studying Croatian politics demands a thorough knowledge of the discursive space within which political action takes place. The question of the Balkans features prominently in the Croatian political discourse as one of the fundamental elements that shape Croatian social and political space. The question about the Balkans is present in explicit ways in the political discourse and is always a source of specific identity constructions from which political debates emerge. For that reason it is necessary at this point to examine 'the Balkans' as a concept around which the discourse on Croatian national identity is structured. An interesting question emerges when we look at the discursive construction of the Balkans by the Croatian political elites that reveals itself in the data: does anyone really know where the Balkans are and what they encompass? It becomes evident in the analysis that the answer is negative. The Balkans is referred to as a concrete, geographical region but without clearly marked boundaries or definitions about that space. It is therefore possible to understand the Balkans as an imagined space. This assumption is supported by two contradictions that emerge in the Croatian discourse: the acceptance of the Balkans as a region and questioning of the legitimacy of the concept at the same time.

According to post-structuralist theory, mutual constituitiveness is the basis of discursive constructs. It is thus necessary to step away from the Croatian subject for a moment and look into the concept of 'the Balkans' as defined by non-Croatian sources that represent the Western conception of the term. The analysis will then question whether such a construction of the Balkans features in the Croatian political discourse, where variations emerge and what the consequences are.

In his essay, *The Clash of Civilisations*[21], Huntington applies the idea to the Balkans as a good example of an area that is destined to face eternal conflicts due to

[21] S. Huntington (1993), 'The Clash of Civilisations', *Foreign Affairs,* 72 no. 3, pp.23-49

its mix of cultures and religions. The Balkans are thus not simply a geographical region but a civilisation that stands in opposition to the West. Within the Balkans there are variations and it is these internal differences that make the region dangerous and inherently unstable. In the same way the 'ancient hatred thesis' has been equally emphasised as a mechanism for explaining the Balkans. According to this thesis the basic idea is that 'the Balkan peoples, irreconcilably divided by different religions and cultural affiliations, are forever fated to be at each other's throats like cats and dogs'.[22] What becomes apparent is that the notion of the Balkans carries an underlying sense of danger, threat, violence and instability. It features as a heart of darkness type space in the heart of Europe. The study of the Balkans thus ceases to be geographical but reveals itself to be a discourse of a civilisation. My analysis is embedded in this tradition and treats the Balkans as a primarily civilisational space. However, the geographical space and its alleged frontiers are central to the study despite the apparent contradiction. It will be argued that the debate concerning geographical frontiers only makes sense if these boundaries are looked at in the light of the discursive construction of the Balkans as being the opposite of the civilised West and the mystery of where these borders actually are. This approach is aligned with the existing literature where the Balkans are increasingly treated as a civilisational-discursive construct.[23]

The Balkans are primarily characterised by their alleged place on the world map: between the East and the West of Europe. This geographical-civilisational position determines the identity of the Balkans[24] and this 'in-betweeness' has become its central identity feature and is echoed in the Croatian national discourse that places Croatia in-between civilisations. Croatian national identity is often expressed in the negative: it is not Balkan, not like Serbia, not backward and uncivilised. These reference points at the same time explicitly show the discursive construction of the Balkans in the Croatian discourse, but also show the West as an identity at the opposite side of the spectrum and as being mutually exclusive. The Balkans are thus

[22] E. Durham (1905), *The Burden of the Balkans*, London, Thomas Nelson, p. 20
[23] See L. Hansen (2006), *Security as Practice,* Routledge, Abingdon and M. N. Todorova (1997), *Imagining the Balkans*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
[24] V. Goldsworthy (2002), 'Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization' in *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA and London, p.25

discursively constructed as a negative of the West. The following quote effectively demonstrates that feature of the Western construction of the Balkans:

> But once again there arose the question that seemed so eternally asked and so perpetually appropriate here: just why? Just why is there this dire inevitability about the Balkans being so fractious and unsettled a corner of the world, an inevitability that always seemed to exist? Just what was it that had marked out this particular peninsula, this particular gyre of mountains and plains, caves and streams, and made it a byword, quite literally, for hostility and hate?[25]

The text addresses the reason for the apparent everlasting hostility and hatred in the Balkans. It discursively constructs the Balkans as being inherently unstable and violent, as suffering from an *inevitability* that has been present since the wake of time. This temporal - civilisational feature makes it impossible, or at least very difficult to challenge the notion of violence as a defining feature of the Balkans. The events of the 1990s were thus interpreted from this point of view in the Western media and the academia. 'Historically, relations between Serbs, Croats and Muslims had been appalling for centuries. […] The place has always been considered a powder keg.[26] This quote demonstrates the same principle of discursively representing the Balkans as a place where violence and hatred *naturally* occur. Just like the wild landscape that Todorova describes in her book, the Balkan people are constructed as having a natural tendency for violence which is beyond hope for change and as such is outside Western civilisation. The complexity of the relationships between the ex-Yugoslav countries and the conflicts between 1990 and 1995 have too often been reduced to the ancient hatred concept and constructed as being too complicated for Westerners to understand.

This Western perception of the nature of the Balkans has been critically assessed in a volume by Bjelić and Savić, *Balkan as a Metaphor*.[27] The essays address different aspects of the Balkan identity across case studies and examine the

[25] S. Winchester (1999), *The Fracture Zone: A Return to the Balkans*, London, Viking, p. 26
[26] Colonel B. Stewart (1994), *Broken Lives. A Personal View of the Bosnian Conflict*, London, Harper Collins, p. 6
[27] D. I. Bjelić and O. Savić (2002), *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, The MIT Press, Cambridge MA and London

relationship between Western constructions and their local variations. The authors challenge the dominant Western discourse on the Balkans and seek to identify its role in establishing the 'truths' about the region and the way that the Western constructions influenced political events within it. The authors point that 'if Balkan peoples are frequently accused of being trapped in their own history, many of the outsiders dealing with the region have also shown an unwillingness to think beyond a symbolic, formulaic representation, to the point where the Balkans have become nothing but a metaphor for conflict, incivility and violence.'[28] This willingness to engage with the discourse on the Balkans and offer a regional commentary is in itself an important achievement. The book presents valuable criticism of the uncritical acceptance and reproduction of the discourse on the Balkans that has become sedimented in the Western academia and the media. It is therefore a valuable contribution to the debate about the Balkans and raises important questions. However, the volume does not contain a Croatian perspective. This study will attempt to answer the question of whether Croatia can critically engage with the Balkan discourse and offer an alternative. The implications that the volume raises concern the Croatian case and pose the following questions: can Croatia ever change the perceptions abroad? Can its identity as a Western European country be legitimated?

The following section will look more closely into the civilisational discourse between 'the West' and 'the East' and the way it features in the Croatian articulation of its identity.

The civilisational discourse and the radical other

At this point it is necessary to examine the Croatian construction of the civilisational discourse between the West and the East. The Balkans are one of the central features of this discourse and exist at several levels. As argued in the theory

[28] Ibid. p. 34

and methodology chapters, identity is a social category and revolves around the processes of 'othering'. The self identifies against the other, which is a subject position that is its direct opposite and thus mutually exclusive. This study identifies the Balkans as Croatia's radical other at a broader level, while Serbia functions as a local representation and embodiment of the Balkans. The civilisational discourse positions 'the West' against 'the East' where the Balkans belong to the East and hold a distinct identity from the West. This otherness of the Balkans is most apparent in the discourse on Croatia's role in the region where it acts as an extension of the European Union and its democratising power, as well as in the constructions of Serbia as inferior to both the West and Croatia.

An important question arises at this point: where do the Balkans actually start? By examining discourses on the Balkans we can conclude that the northern border of the Balkans is always pushed to the south. In the Western discourse Croatia is included in the Balkans and shares its traits. As discussed previously, the Balkans are represented as an actual space with a strong normative dimension to it. The ethics of the Balkans is purely negative: a powder keg waiting to blow up, without any possibility to change such an intrinsic property. In the Croatian discourse the geographical and civilisational notions also mix. Croatia does not consider itself to be Balkan but places the frontier along the actual borders with Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Living on the fringe of Western Europe has been accepted as part of Croatian identity and fortified by historic accounts of its belonging to Western European empires, rather than the Byzantium and subsequently the Ottoman Empire. In addition, the use of the Latin alphabet rather than Cyrillic, belonging to Roman Catholicism rather than Eastern Orthodox Christianity, adds to Croatia's identity as a Western European rather than Eastern European civilisation.

Being on the border between East and West in Europe has been constructed as a difficulty in the Croatian discourse and I argue that as long as there is real or perceived danger that comes from the Balkans that feature makes it impossible for Croatia to become fully Western. The shadow of conflict is always present in the discourse about the Balkans, whether real or hypothetical. The Balkans are constructed as a violent, irrational place and opposed to the West constructed as

peaceful and civilised. This feature will be analysed in more detail in the following two chapters and it will be argued that the discourse of insecurity and violence makes Croatian identity as a Western country questionable.

At this stage the official discourse is trying to place Croatia in another geographical setting in order to fortify its non-Balkan identity. The following quote demonstrates this point. In an official visit to Germany in April 2000, the Head of Government Ivica Račan discussed with Joschka Fischer, German Head of Diplomacy, the importance for Croatia to be seen as Europe's partner who could in time become a vehicle for integration. He stated: 'It is expected from us to do Europe's work in a way, in our relations with the neighbours. Croatia's geographical position is important: between Central Europe, the Mediterranean and the Balkans.'[29] Račan places Croatia in a non-defined space: between three distinct regions. It can be argued that this strategy opts for a vague definition of regional identity rather than a simple anti-Balkan statement in order to make the claim more credible. The statement also shows a difficulty in stating Croatia's identity in the positive. Remaining in-between several geographical spaces allows space for navigation and redefinition, but at the same time demonstrates the instability of the discourse and its internal tensions.

The following statement by the President, made during a visit to Hungary for the Summit of the Visegrad countries adds to the argued instability of the discourse by placing Croatia in a specific region:

> Central Europe is a fact, and a united Europe is our goal. We can reach it only if we acknowledge this fact. Here we have present EU member states that can help us outside the EU to reach our goals, through cooperation and solidarity. (...) It is on us to make the central-European space stable, prosperous and integrated into united Europe, with boundaries that do not divide but connect countries.[30]

[29] I. Račan, *Novi List*, 27.4 2000, my translation
[30] President Mesić during a visit to Hungary, *Jutarnji List,* 29.4.2000, my translation

The President speaks of Central Europe as a place where Croatia also belongs. This construction is problematic, however, because it does not follow a historical account of Croatia's identity and it is not present elsewhere in the discourse. Just like the previous text, this statement points to a non-defined situation where Croatia is struggling to find its space and to belong to a group of countries other than the Balkans. The attempt of defining Croatia as a Central European country did not succeed and it did not reappear in the official discourse again.

The following text, a statement from one of the President's foreign policy advisors, offers an interesting discourse that separates the Balkan region and civilisation and argues that Croatia can be a part of one but not the other. It starts with an appraisal of rapid democratic change after the elections and introduces the idea of a Balkan Croatia in the regional sense:

> These internal changes are reflected in our foreign policy, in Croatia's relations with the world and with the neighbouring countries and countries of the region. For a time the term 'Balkans' was something that had to be avoided at all cost. But I do not see a problem with it now. We are in the Balkans and should not be trying to escape this geographical space. What has to be escaped is the primitivism and understanding of the Balkans and 'balkanisation' in that sense. We are where we are, nothing to be ashamed of since there have been great civilisational achievements here.[31]

This text presents a challenging representation of Croatia. It argues that there is nothing negative about being from the Balkans as long as it is defined as a geographical region. The speaker does stress that the region and the civilisation must be separated and explicitly states that what he has in mind is not Balkans in the civilisational sense. He identifies the latter as primitive. This articulation that separates the region and the civilisation shows potential for a complex, layered Balkan identity that is not just defined by violence and conflict, but by culture and progress. The speaker hints at the recent past when being in the Balkans had to be avoided at all costs and calls for a change in attitude in the new political era. However, this approach did not prove to be a success and the speaker's suggestion

[31] I. Vidović, interview in *Globus,* 18.6.2000, my translation

that being Balkan is not a bad thing in itself provoked strong reactions both from the readers and politicians and demonstrated the difficulty of divorcing the Balkan region from a negative civilisational construct. Such suggestions did not appear again within the official discourse and, as will be demonstrated in the next section and chapters, the notion of Croatia as Balkan was strongly refuted throughout the year.

Moreover, the Balkans do not stop at the regional level. The Croatian national discourse goes deeper into its identity and makes even more specific claims about its radical other. Serbia is identified as such and discursively constructed as the local extension of the Balkan civilisation. Again, Serbia and Yugoslavia are used interchangeably in the Croatian discourse and represent the Balkans. This is most apparent in texts addressing relations with Yugoslavia, where Serbia is frequently used in its place. The following text addresses the issue of regional integration and the role of the European Union and demonstrates the importance of that relationship in the context of Croatian identity discourse:

> Since we started our journey towards the EU we have never been further from any kind of Balkan association and the very act of joining the EU will free us from all phobias about being involved in some kind of a Balkan community.[32]

The speaker articulates the West against the East divide in terms of the EU against 'some sort of Balkan community'. She positions EU membership as something that belongs to the future while the Balkans are the thing of the past. A Balkan community that Pusić alludes to is Yugoslavia. Being part of the EU excludes the possibilities of falling into another type of Balkan or Yugoslav union.[33] Dangers of being associated with Yugoslavia in any way are thus prevented by being embraced by the European Union and in that way fully achieving the desired Western European identity. The EU thus becomes not just a solution to the Croatian problem but a way of reinforcing Croatia's non-Balkan identity and a sure way of preventing any future associations with Serbia/Yugoslavia.

[32] Vesna Pusić of HNS in *Jutarnji List*, 22.11.2000, my translation
[33] On several occasions Pusić refers to this hypothetical union as 'Balkania'

A similar point was made by the Minister of European Integration, Ivan Jakovčić in an interview to the *Nacional*:

> *Nacional*: HDZ has not positively greeted a single thing that has been done by the new regime.
>
> IJ: It is true that the opposition has had strong reactions so far. (…) I do resent the fact that they all continue to pursue anti-European politics and what that effectively means is keeping Croatia in the Balkans with the Milošević regime. Those gentlemen that have been against every Government's move are actually working on keeping Croatia beside Milošević. Tuđman and him were political twins but the new government has no intention to carry on with that politics. That is in the past. This government wants to include Croatia in the European family and separate it from what is called political Balkans.[34]

The Minister accuses the opposition on the whole as being anti-European, and thus Balkan. The two are constructed as mutually exclusive so not favouring the government's path to EU membership is relegated to the inferior level of the Balkans. He makes an even stronger claim when the Balkans are linked to Milošević and his regime. In this way the opposition is equated with being Balkan, which means violent, undemocratic and backward. This point will again be addressed in the following chapters where all action that challenges the official discourse is discursively constructed in the same way. Furthermore, the temporal element is introduced here and the Balkans are placed in 'the past' where Tuđman and Milošević are political twins.

Again, the EU is positioned as Croatia's future and mutually exclusive to the Balkan option. Despite being an obvious attempt at undermining the claims made by the opposition by simplifying discursive constructions of what is politically desirable and viable, the text offers an insight into the way the new official discourse articulated the nature of Croatia's identity. It explicitly positions the West (European Union) against the East (Balkans-Serbia-Milošević) and reproduces the discourses of cooperation with the West/EU and non-cooperation with the East/Balkans. The nature of Serbia is not addressed here in great depth since at this stage it still featured as an external element to Croatia and the embodiment of the Balkan civilisation that

[34] Ivan Jakovčić in *Nacional,* 23.5.2000, my translation

Croatia disassociates from. The problem of Serbia as an internal element of Croatian identity appears within the minority rights protection discourse and will be analysed later on in depth. However, the importance of acknowledging Serbia as a Radical Other at this point is great since it is present in the official discourse as a continuous, underlying force that shapes political debates. It is only later that the Radical Other is subject to change and challenges the established 'truths'.

Reproducing the Western discourse on the Balkans

By this point it becomes apparent from the analysis that Croatia sees itself as being trapped in-between the Balkans and Western Europe, and constantly reproduces the oppositions between the two in order to secure the stability of its identity. The analysed texts demonstrate the emotiveness of the feeling towards the Balkans. It is not simply a political question, but there is something profoundly personal about it that manifests itself in the discourse. 'Leaving' the Balkans behind is presented as fundamental to the very existence of the Croatian state that goes beyond the political implications of such a development. The relationships between Croatia and the Balkans, and Croatia and the European Union are conceived and reproduced with reference to the binary oppositions 'the West' against 'the East'. As I have argued earlier, the West has discursively constructed the Balkans in a particular way: inherently violent, backward and hostile to progress. The analysis of the Croatian political discourse demonstrates that in the post-election period in the year 2000 there was no challenging of the Western discourse on the Balkans, but that Croatia participated in the reproduction of the 'West' against 'East' antagonism following the European discourse. Croatia looked to the West as an ideal of democracy, justice and freedom and was willing to cooperate in order to be able to join the European family. This is evident in the discourses on the Constitution and the nature of the Croatian state, as well as in the discourses of justice and responsibility, analysed in the following chapters. However, at the same time it was antagonistic when it addressed the Balkans.

Croatia occasionally challenges the Western construction of the Balkans but only to a certain extent. It separates itself from the Balkans on cultural and historical grounds, but it does not question the very foundation of the meaning of the Balkans put forward by the West. It is here that we can find the cracks in the official discourse regarding the West-Balkans duality. If Croatia defines itself as not Balkan and desires to separate itself from it at all cost, it is at this very point that Croatia reproduces the discourse of antagonism that reinforces its Balkan identity.[35] Croatia is thus locked in a paradox and cannot fully attain its Western identity that stresses cooperation. This situation demonstrates the difficulty of changing embedded discourses and the reality of boundaries within a discursive field. In order to illustrate this point further the following section will demonstrate this tension in the official discourse by examining the nature of cooperation by European standards and what Croatia perceives its role to be in the Balkan region.

4.5 Turning over a new leaf: spreading democracy in the region

An important element of the debate with the West became an idea that Croatia should work as a factor of stabilisation in the region. The changes on the political scene were distinctively radical in comparison to previous periods and seemed promising in the long run. The recognition of Croatia's success was evident in the hopes and encouragement that its case can serve as an example and a model for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia to follow, each in their own right.

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tonino Picula stated:

> There are big expectations from us but our primary task is to democratise ourselves. Until we do that and arrive to a position of an EU candidate our democratic spill-over into our neighbourhood will be quite limited, despite the expectations from the world. But we are not running away from our obligation of democratising others. Depending on the success we have in Croatia we can expect to influence our neighbours. I do not know how successful Croatia will

[35] R. Močnik, "The Balkans as an Element in Ideological Mechanisms" in Bjelić and Savić (eds) (2002), op. cit. p. 83

> be in building these bridges but in any case we do have great potential for playing an important role in this part of Europe.[36]

His view of Croatia as playing a part of the bridge between the Balkans and the West is based on the discourse of progress. Croatia has to democratise itself first in order to be able to export democracy to its neighbourhood. This text shows that the EU is reproduced in discourse as superior and democratic, while the neighbourhood – the Balkans, as inferior. Croatia positions itself as being in-between the two, involved in the processes of profound change. The identity that it desires is in the future and EU membership will make it real. It is thus possible to question the articulation of the radical other of the neighbourhood as legitimate. If Croatia is not yet fully Western can it claim to be radically different from its 'true' Balkan neighbours? However, the texts analysed do not offer a satisfactory answer but all insist in treating the relationship between the poles of the civilisational spectrum as solid and mutually exclusive.

Another discourse that emerges at this point is that of ethics. Foreign Minister Picula stresses that Croatia has a duty to democratise others and not run away from that responsibility. This normative element implies that the discursive construction of non-cooperation as being central to the Balkans can be questioned. Acknowledging the ethical implications of cooperating with the radical other takes Croatia further away from the Balkans and its reproduction of the Balkan civilisational discourse established by the West. The co-existence of the non-cooperation discourse with the discourse of Western co-operation in the Croatian context is nevertheless evident in the following section of the same text and suggests an ambiguity of identity relationships. The question of power is raised and coupled with the discourse on ethics and responsibility.

> When I say this I do not mean that Croatia should be a regional power as envisaged by President Tuđman. That was grotesque. We want to be a real democratic country that supports development and co-operation in the region but without being hostages to that region. We do not want that our chances of joining of the EU is limited, or God

[36] T. Picula, interview in *Globus*, 26.3.2000, my translation

> forbid, conditioned by the pace of democratic transition and development of our neighbours. We have been told that all accession to the EU will be made on highly individual bases. However, we cannot escape our geographical position and obligations we have because we will not be able to develop all our democratic potential if we have wars raging in the neighbourhood, totalitarian regimes or crisis.[37]

Acknowledging its position as a small state that is only learning how to be truly democratic was coupled with an understanding of the importance of that position given the nature of the geo-political setting. Leading the way and contributing to bringing democracy into the Balkans was compatible with the political elites' vision of Croatia as being Western enough to be able to aspire to become 'truly' Western in the foreseeable future. Being recognised as a 'partner' rather than a 'case' or simply a 'problem' is thus a boost of encouragement and a sign of Croatia's developing new identity being embraced by the actors deemed highly important. The speaker positions himself against Tuđman's vision of what a regional power meant. In this way Croatia's role is that of being an extension of the European Union and Western democratic values, rather than an actor that acts for its own sake independently of the broader political context.

However, despite the good will and encouraging messages of being willing to help Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia (*after* it frees itself from Milošević) to move towards democracy, and the expressed desire for Croatia to be a generator of positive changes in the region generally, Croatian politicians early on expressed their views on the boundaries they would not be willing to cross. When asked whether the international community put Croatia in the same group of Balkan countries again, the Foreign Minister Picula replied:

> Before the Stability Pact we were operating within a regional system approach. The emphasis now is on individual efforts and progress, including the acceptance of European standards and of moving towards the EU and NATO memberships. (…) Just compare the efforts of the last three months and how we have changed the status of our country in comparison with the one it had before, because of the belligerent and somewhat autistic politics they pursued. I think we have a reason to be satisfied. We have confirmed that we are

[37] T. Picula, interview in *Globus*, 18.3.2000, my translation

> being increasingly perceived as partners with special obligations in this region. However, as Head of Government Račan has said, we will not be sharing the same regional destiny. We have institutionally based conditions to put Croatia in the fast lane.[38]

Not sharing the same regional destiny with Serbia and other Balkan states is thus a matter of not only noticeable development and democratisation, but a reinforcement of Croatia's identity as a non-Balkan country. Being 'in the fast lane' and getting to the desired goal was more then just a question of progress: it was a question of getting there before the Balkan states do, and getting to the West early enough to feel safe and assured of its identity and position. Therefore, helping Serbia is acceptable and justifiable as long as there are clear borders between the two. The discourse of antagonism and non-cooperation that is inherent in the Balkans is visible yet again and demands to be considered from this point of view. In the official Croatian discourse the nature of co-operation and goodwill towards neighbouring Balkan countries can therefore only exist within the wider framework of the European Union initiative and protection. Anything else would be deemed dangerous and detrimental to Croatian progress.

Another statement by the Foreign Minister concerns the nature of cooperation in the Balkans and the difficulty of working within that context:

> Political changes in Croatia thus caused excitement in Europe: people showed at elections the desire for positive change. Europe wants us to be their partner who will help resolve the regional problem. I want to stress that we are not being pushed into bad political options; they just want us to contribute in clearing things up in this area. We must serve as an example to our eastern neighbours that it is possible to change the government through proper pre-election campaign and by forming certain coalitions. The international community really needs a move forward in terms of the status quo that exists in Bosnia and Kosovo, and especially in Yugoslavia. We are aware of the hopes that they are putting into Croatia. This is a chance for the whole new generation that is coming into power now and it would be a disaster to waste it.[39]

[38] Interview with T. Picula, *Globus*, 18.3.2000, my translation
[39] T. Picula, *Jutarnji List*, 28.1.2000, my translation

The ‘bad political options’ concern a Balkan union of a kind; something to be avoided at all costs. An example to the neighbours is acceptable as long as Croatia has full European support and works as its agent. Being compared to Yugoslavia/Serbia becomes a question of Croatia’s Balkan identity – something that is considered the least desirable option for the future. If Croatia is to be like Serbia then it has not developed and democratised, it has not moved away from the Balkans. However, in order to reinforce its Western identity there was a request by the EU to increase engagement in European attempts to cooperate with the Balkans. Accepting its geographical position but with a strong temporal and ethical distance from Yugoslavia was thus understood as the only possible way forward to Europe. The following text demonstrates this in an explicit way:

> We have always claimed that we support regional cooperation but that every country should approach the EU membership on an individual basis. There is no doubt about it - we are for good neighbourly relations, which includes our realisation that Croatia connects the Mediterranean, Central Europe and the South-East. On the 3rd January elections were held that signalled the democratisation of our country. However, Croatia has not been accompanied by the democratisation of the region. It does play the part in the EU’s ambitions to transform Europe’s South-East. That is an important message but we are not expected to be prisoners of the region. It is important to us to be seen as a possible future candidate to the EU membership.[40]

The statement explicitly juxtaposes ‘the region’ – the Balkans and the European Union. The Balkans have not followed Croatia into the processes of democratisation and that in itself is a danger because being influenced by the Balkan neighbours would keep Croatia a ‘prisoner’ in this region where it does not truly belong. The future of EU membership and the past of the Balkan prison stand in stark contrast in the discourse on Croatian identity and its political options.

The following text is looking at the way that Serbia was perceived and positioned in the official discourse in terms of the Croatian civilising role. It links the

[40] T. Picula, as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 17.2.2000, my translation

Croatian obligation to transform the region to a more personal level of Croatian identity.

> As a Croatian citizen and a politician I have always been very hurt and offended when Europe would compare Croatia to Serbia, and for that I blame former authorities. We are making all of this effort in order to move away from such a perception. The greatest achievement of our foreign politics is that we have shed the image of being related to Serbia. Now Croatia is being perceived as an active factor in the transformation of not only Serbia, but the whole region, and by meeting standards that Europe expects here. We are now creating democracy although that might seem a bit too slow for Croatia's citizens.[41]

Being compared to Serbia is considered to be offensive and demeaning. Again, the language is highly emotional and demonstrates the importance of being recognised as different from Serbia and the Balkans. Croatian achievements are thus measured in the distance between Croatia and its identity as a Western European country and the radical other. The speaker explicitly elaborates that this relationship has to maintain that space between the two if Croatia is to be able to act in the region. The distance is what allows the transformative power of the EU to fully work in Croatia and only from that position to reach down to Serbia and other Balkan countries. In this way the discourses of cooperation and non-cooperation are reconciled and allow Croatia to reproduce the Western discourse of Balkan antagonism with the Western discourse on democratic standards of cooperation under specific conditions.

[41] Interview with T. Picula, Minister of Foreign Affairs, *Globus*, 18.3.2000, my translation

4.6 The Zagreb Summit and its implications

The Zagreb Summit that took place in November 2000 was interpreted as a sign of EU recognition and of further encouragement for Croatia to carry on its work in order to become a complete democratic state governed by law. The alternative to the EU, in the words of President Mesić is:

> (…) Balkanisation in a political and civilisational sense. We do not want an isolated Croatia that can be abused and robbed from the inside. Still, there are people that will demonstrate against the Summit by using transparent proclamations that hide their true intentions. Those who do that are directly working against this state and its interests and I am calling all citizens not to be fooled.[42]

Mesić calls upon the civilisational discourse of Balkans vs. Europe and warns of the danger of choosing the wrong group. However, the concept of 'Balkanisation' does not stand for Serbia in this case but refers to those who do not support democratic changes, who want to protest against Serbia's appearance at the Summit[43]; in short, those who are working against the modern, democratised Croatia that is willing to enter into a dialogue with Serbia, by keeping to the old, dishonest, and backward ways characteristic of the Balkans. In this way 'Balkanisation' and being from the Balkans are not simply geographical/civilisational concepts, but directly anti-Croatian and subversive. As I have argued previously, it is Croatia's past and the previous regime that was also Balkan, and as a consequence dangerous for contemporary policymaking. Holding on to the old ways and greeting Serbia with rage and hostility is equally un-civilised and Balkan, as Serbia itself. It was the fall of Milošević that made it possible for Serbia to attend the Summit and marked the initial stage of distinguishing between his regime and the Serbian people. It is something that featured in the early post-Tuđmanist discourse, analysed in more

[42] President Stipe Mesić as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 22.11.2000.
[43] This was the first time that the leaders of Croatia and Serbia would meet at an international summit. The forthcoming event attracted a lot of attention from the public whose opinion on whether Serbia should attend was divided and thus mirrored the debates among the political elites.

detail in the previous chapter. In this context acceptance of Serbia at the Summit hosted by Croatia signifies a Western attitude of agreement and tolerance that Croatia has accepted. Serbia that is not represented by Milošević thus has an opportunity to change into a less radical other. As I will discuss later in the chapter, it is this particular construction of Serbia by the Croats that makes it acceptable, and later necessary, to recognise the Serbian minority and to consider them equal, as is written in the Constitution.

The Summit marked a new phase between the EU and Croatia. The most important element was a promise from the EU that all future candidates that come from the Western Balkans shall be evaluated on an individual basis. Croatia will consequently not have to wait for other countries in the region to join the EU in a group, but will do so on the basis of its individual progress. The President clarified the matter in clear terms:

> The EU is very much interested in the regional aspect of joining the EU but the way that was understood in Croatia had a strong emotional component. It was often interpreted as 'returning to the Balkans'. Eventually, this fear was understood in Brussels and was decided that new members shall join individually.[44]

The fear of being grouped together with the 'real Balkans' thus generates a fear of being taken back to the trap of the East, the foster home, under the Serbian hegemony. The presence of Serbia at the Summit was enough to cause suspicion among many and to start speculations about a Balkan union being prepared. The otherness of Serbia is continuously invoked through concepts of 'Balkanisation', isolation, inability for democratic change and fear of stagnation. Becoming Western excludes any presence of Serbia/Yugoslavia/the Balkans in Croatia's future. Institutional ties with the European Union secure this division between the 'real Balkans' and Croatia and are seen as the only option. Everything else leads back to the past.

[44] President Stipe Mesić as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 22.11.2000, my translation

The adoption of the Stabilisation and Association Process hence represented a new chapter in the relations between the EU and Croatia as well as between Croatia and its Eastern neighbours. The threat of a regional development towards EU membership was removed and although Yugoslavia participated at the Summit it was received with a positive assessment. In the speech given in front of the Summit participants who belonged to the Central European Initiative, Ivica Račan stated that 'The participation of the Yugoslav Republic has given a new dimension to the relations of the countries in this region, ending the period of instability and crisis.'[45] By rejecting the politics of Milošević Serbia is starting the process of democratisation and as such it has the potential to be Croatia's partner in the region, rather than a threat.

The text of the final Declaration of the Zagreb Summit opens with naming the participants: heads of state or government of EU member states and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Foreign Minister of Slovenia, and stating that the meeting takes place 'at a time when democracy is about to carry the day throughout this region'.[46]

The text positions that period of time as being open to democratic changes and thus allowing 'the region' to progress 'towards' Europe. It is interesting that the text of the Declaration is not specific in naming the geo-political space, but refers to it as the 'region' in a vague manner. In doing so, it corresponds to the official Croatian discourse and its insistence on avoiding naming this space in order to circumvent a possible ideological identification that accompanies it. 'The region' thus remains un-named but nevertheless real on the political map of Europe. The text invokes the 'victory of democracy' in Croatia, Macedonia and Yugoslavia that opens 'the way for regional reconciliation and cooperation' where the recent 'historic changes enable all the countries in the region to establish new relations, beneficial to all of them, for the stability in the region and peace and stability on the European

[45] I. Račan, *Slobodna Dalmacija,* 25.11.2000, my translation
[46] Final Declaration of the Zagreb Summit, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/enlargement_process/accession_process/how_does_a_country_join_the_eu/sap/zagreb_summit_en.htm. Last accessed in September 2009.

continent.'[47] This passage demonstrates well the poststructuralist emphasis on the implicit and what is not said. 'The region' continues to feature in the Declaration discourse and its function is to placate difficult circumstances in which ex-Yugoslav countries were born. Avoiding the term Balkans makes it possible to talk around the actual events and relationships. The war not only took place in the Balkans but was constructed as 'Balkan', which carried very strong connotations, as argued previously. This makes any discussion about peace, cooperation and good neighbourly relations in the Balkan context impossible. The two are mutually exclusive and belong to different civilisational spaces. Omitting to name the space Balkans and resorting to the more neutral 'region' seems to fit the purpose of the summit where all the countries are brought together to discuss the options for their future. However, despite not being explicitly named, the Balkans are present like a dark shadow. The recent changes are deemed 'historic' because they allow for the possibility of cooperation, stability and peace between former enemies.

It is important to stress that the text of the Declaration matches the official Croatian discourse on the matter of naming the political space. 'The Region', rather than 'the Balkans' manages to downplay the connotations associated with the Balkans and to soften the recent historical events. Neutralising the political space thus points to the difficulty of placing Croatia and other countries on a map of Europe. It is possible to raise a question at this point and wonder whether the European Union has enough weight to challenge different political discourses and to incorporate them into its community.

The Summit was understood as a positive result of national efforts and progress that received approval and recognition from the EU. Its coming closer could thus obliterate the difficult Balkan subject, until it is finally dispersed and forgotten when EU membership is obtained. This positioning of the Balkans as being diametrically opposite to Europe/West is implicitly present in the European discourse. Avoiding naming the Balkans as such points to the problematic nature of the political space in question and fluctuating identities of Croatia and other

[47] Declaration, op. cit.

neighbouring countries. By not being fully Western European and rejecting the Balkans, Croatia is left hanging in-between its past and its future.

4.7 Concluding remarks

This chapter has analysed what has been identified as a 'civilisational discourse' that positions the West against the Balkans. After the elections at the beginning of the year 2000 a new direction that would take the country into EU membership was promised. The discourse of an idealised West embodied in the European Union emerged and was promoted as the only option for a modern Croatia. The alternative was staying in the Balkans together with Serbia.

This positioning of West against the Balkan East found its way into a wide array of policy discourses, from the debate on the definition of the state, the question of cooperation with the neighbouring countries to the achievements with the EU, such as the Zagreb Summit. Discourses of progress and democratisation were central to the debates and were positioned against the general Balkan backwardness of non-cooperation and its inherent violence. Serbia emerged as the radical other in the official discourse that occupied a position of the local Balkan subject. Its geographical position of bordering with Croatia was perceived not just as a security threat but as a civilisational menace. Its proximity to Croatia required a change in approach and careful deliberation on the nature of cooperation that was permissible with the Balkan subject that would satisfy European Union requirements but at the same time not compromise Croatia's desire for cutting off ties with the Balkans and Serbia.

The following two chapters address the questions of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the problems regarding minority rights protection. Both case studies are rooted in the civilisational discourse analysed here and the analysis seeks to show how Croatia's changing identity as a Western European country was discursively constructed in these two

areas. Notions of what it means to be ‘Western’ and ‘democratic’ drive the debates forward and offer an opportunity to discover the importance of the domestic context in the study of politics. The civilisational discourse and the radical other addressed in this thesis are not just tools for the study of political events but elements the study of which contributes to the theoretical foundations of this work. The process of othering and the role of the radical other are especially important in this study of a changing identity and will be addressed in more detail in the following chapters.

5. The case of cooperating with the ICTY

5.1. Introduction

In the introduction of the thesis I outlined a history of Croatia in the period of the 1990s with the aim of setting the context of the war and the post-war periods, and the political action Croatia was involved in during that turbulent decade. The events of that time heavily influenced the later phase of Croatia's political development and discourses from the Tuđman era were far from extinct. The section on the Tuđmanist nationalist discourse thus serves the purpose of a basis of comparison between old and new, the nationalist and democratic faces of Croatia. It is this shift in Croatia's national and political identity that I examine further in this chapter, with a detailed examination of the problem of cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for the ex-Yugoslavia (ICTY). This complex relationship between identity and policy is at the heart of a poststructuralist analysis of a case study and rests on the conceptual apparatus outlined in the theory and methodology chapters.

This chapter is structured around the question of cooperation between Croatia and ICTY. The civilisational discourse, discussed in the previous chapter brings into the debate concepts such as sovereignty and Western European identity. Both are deeply intertwined and have undergone a radical conceptual shift in the new political discourse surrounding Croatia's position in Europe. The questions of sovereignty and Croatian Western identity are also present in the area of minority rights, which will be analysed in the following chapter and looked at from a different angle.

The focus of my investigation in this chapter is the official discourse of the Croatian political elites and so provides the greater part of my data. However, I will also engage at some points with the oppositional discourses, mainly those consisting of the Tuđman legacy. The purpose of this juxtaposition is to show how they used the same concepts and strategies, but with different policy options in mind and with different interpretations of identity at play.

As argued previously, sovereignty was an important part of the Tuđmanist discourse where it functioned as a nodal point around which his nationalist discourse was woven. In his discourse, sovereignty was constructed as Croatia's goal, the reason beyond a long struggle against different foreign rulers. It was a 'centuries old dream', finally achieved with the establishment of the independent Croatian state in 1990. In the new, post-Tuđman discourse the question of sovereignty was thus historically embedded and had to be addressed when approaching any important policy decision. The fear of losing Croatia's sovereignty was still strong in the early post-Tuđmanist period of 2000 and thus featured heavily in certain policy choices and decisions. The question of cooperating with the ICTY as well as the question of minority rights protection was both immediately examined in the light of the problem of sovereignty. The change of the political landscape and venturing into the new, unmapped territory of closer engagement with the European Union and ICTY required a new understanding of democracy, and as a consequence, a new understanding of the concept of sovereignty itself.

This concept provides the first step of my analysis and demonstrates how discursive strategies were employed in the context of cooperation with The Hague tribunal and moved the sovereignty debate away from the discourse of danger and fear of its loss towards the question of legitimacy and Western European norms. The second step of the analysis focuses on the relationship between the Croatian subject and the other.

Cooperating with the International Criminal Tribunal for ex Yugoslavia was a hot topic in the year 2000. The new Government was determined to increase cooperation with The Hague in order to start moving in the direction of EU membership. Tuđman's policy of non-cooperation was abandoned in the name of development, Westernising the country and trying to minimise all ties with the Balkans. One of the problems facing the political actors was justifying this move to the people and saving the face of the Homeland War. The War played a great role in the shaping of Croatian identity during the entire period of the 1990s and was one of the key nodal points in the Croatian political discourse. It was defined as a just war for the liberation of occupied Croatian territories, and marked the Croats as victims

of Serbian aggression and desire for territorial expansion. One of the major problems of collaborating with the Tribunal was the case of General Blaškić during which Croatia was confronted with accusations of being involved in an act of aggression in the sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992. This case thus threatened to turn Croatia from 'victim' to 'aggressor'. The difficulty that it presented was important on several levels: it had the potential to destabilise the existing national identity in terms of being a 'victim' of the 'Balkan conflict', and it made it difficult to justify further cooperation with the Tribunal that was obviously not following the divide between a 'Croatian victim' and the 'Serbian aggressor'. It is something that I will examine in more detail in the following sections of the chapter.

5.2 Rearticulating sovereignty

'Cooperating with The Hague is a question of judiciary and not a political question.'[1]

Examining the question of cooperation between Croatia and the ICTY is rooted in the discourse of where Croatia belongs, as I have argued previously. The debate about the necessity to fulfil the European Union's criteria of accession was focused primarily on the ICTY at the beginning of the new Government and presidential mandate, while the questions of regulating minority rights, institutional reforms and a number of other issues took a back seat at the time.

The main question that surrounded the ICTY debate was whether Croatia would eventually join the 'European club' if it played by the rules. Opinions were divided over the nature of cooperation itself, although the general consensus among the politicians was that Croatia was definitely (Western) European and thus essentially eligible to become an EU member. However, despite the agreement about the country's identity there was little agreement on how to get there. On the one hand, the Croatian Democratic Union - HDZ, now in opposition, strongly advocated

[1] Interview with the Head of Government Ivica Racan in *Jutarnji List*, 19.2.2000, my translation

caution in dealing with the tribunal, for the sake of not diminishing Croatia's power of jurisdiction. The coalition, on the other hand, held a strong view that the only way forward was to closely cooperate. The civilisational discourse featured heavily in their argument and the options were presented as following: Croatia can either join the West or return to the Balkans. Two interesting things are apparent here: Croatia exists somewhere in-between and is neither Western nor Balkan, as mentioned earlier. The second is a transcendental claim that links the signifiers 'the Western civilisation' and 'democracy' and puts forward the idea that only as a part of the Western civilisation, embodied in the European Union, can Croatia achieve its desired identity as a truly democratic state.

The analysis is thus conducted at two levels: examining the shift between the 'non-Balkan' and 'almost Western' identities, and on the analysis of discursive strategies employed by the political actors in directing Croatia towards the West. The discourse of the Western world as being the main carrier of true democracy mirrors contemporary attitudes in that very same world. Croatian political discourse takes a further step and equates the European Union with the West and sees it as representing Western values and norms. The new regime excluded Western countries that are not EU members from its discourse, although Switzerland and Norway are both considered equally democratic by the EU. This articulation of 'EU is the embodiment of the Western civilisation' can thus justify the regime's insistence that the only legitimate way forward was towards the West/EU and explain the absence of arguments that would support the possibility of further democratisation outside the EU context.

The Balkans have not been considered Croatia's 'true' home, but rather a kind of foster home, where Croatia was put against the will of the people, according to the wishes of the Communists after the Second World War. The analysis will demonstrate that this negating of the discourse on the Balkan region that includes Croatia was a contradiction within the Croatian discourse since the Balkans are constantly treated as a direct threat to Croatian Western identity. This suggests that the Balkans are not just in the neighbourhood, but have a significant role to play in the Croatian identity discourse. These inconsistencies in the way the Balkans are

constructed point to instability in the official discourse and the non-settled nature of the identity of the contested region. As it was argued in chapter two, the subject needs the other in order to be and to construct its identity, and the relationship between Croatia and the Balkans demonstrates well this complex relationship. Questioning of the borders of the Balkan region and accepting that Croatia was closely related to that space demonstrates the tension in the process of othering, as well as the constructed nature of Croatia's Western identity.

In the official discourse it was Yugoslavia that was mostly Balkan, but Croatia, like Slovenia, never truly belonged there. The question about the nature of 'the Balkans' and Croatia's political decision about trying war criminals poses itself as directly connected to the possibilities that arise out of particular understandings of Croatian identity. Whether Croatia is 'Balkan' or 'Western' influences certain choices and justifies specific steps. The problem of cooperation with the ICTY is not merely a question of judiciary, as the quote above suggests, but a complex area of decision-making that directly affects Croatia's developing identity as a Western European country. The civilisational discourse carries the debates surrounding the cooperation with the ICTY and provides the basis for Croatia's understanding of events and of possible courses of action. I will now turn to the events that were crucial for the development of the cooperation discourse in the year 2000.

In August 1999 the chairwoman of the Tribunal, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald reported Croatia to the UN Security Council for its refusal to work with the Tribunal on the cases related to the military operations Storm and Flash undertaken in 1995, and for refusal to extradite Mladen Naletilić Tuta, a Croat from Bosnia under suspicion of war crimes. The Tribunal asked for measures to ensure further cooperation. The Spokesperson for the ICTY Prosecutor[2], Paul Ripley, stated: 'The fact that this report exists makes things difficult for international organisations and the international community to make any promises to Croatia regarding EU membership. Nothing will change until the problem of cooperating is resolved. We are stuck in the status quo.'[3]

[2] Carla del Ponte was the ICTY prosecutor between 1999 and 2008
[3] Paul Ripley in *Novi List*, 13.1.2000, my translation

Membership of the European Union was again put forward by the new regime as the main principle and goal of Croatia's cooperation with the ICTY. The articulation of national interest that included joining the EU that was developed by the previous regime was accepted and further developed by the new government. The main difference lay in stressing the importance of Croatia joining the European Union as a deserving member that bases its aspirations on actual policy adjustment, rather than on rhetoric. The Head of Government, Ivica Račan said during his visit to Lisbon, at the time of the Portuguese presidency: 'We invite the EU not to judge us according to what we are saying but according to what we are going to be doing in the next few months. In doing so we are hoping to receive the EU's support.'[4] The statement openly positions the new regime against the previous one on the basis of 'words against deeds'. Račan expresses his hope that the EU will acknowledge Croatia's efforts in choosing the European way, supported by his Government.

The year 2000 in Croatia started with a wave of optimism after picking up the pace and improving relations with the Tribunal in the first few months of the year. Foreign affairs minister, Tonino Picula commented on the relations between Croatia and The Hague:

> The new Minister of Judiciary must send the right signals to the Tribunal as soon as possible. The relations between Croatia and The Hague must not be the most difficult part in the development of our new international politics. There are constitutional laws about the cooperation with the tribunal that Croatia has adopted, but was not adhered to in any way by the Ministry of Judiciary in the past. It is time to change that and get the new people on the job in order to achieve progress.[5]

Turning against the previous regime and labelling them as 'those' who did not work in the true interest of the people and the state but for their own benefit, marked a clear shift in the official discourse and the setting up of the dichotomy between the Croatian present and its past – a temporal other. The previous regime, the often non-identified 'those' featured in the new official discourse as a bridge

[4] Statement made by Ivica Račan, *Jutarnji List*, 28.1.2000, my translation
[5] Interview with the Foreign Affairs minister Tonino Picula in *Jutarnji List*, 28.1.2000, my translation

between the new, Western-oriented Croatia and the Balkans, epitomised by Serbia/Yugoslavia.[6] The old regime was acknowledged as 'Croatian' but it contained many features that were not democratic, and thus not Western. The situation demanded a new interpretation of 'Croatia as a Western European country', a concept that did not depend upon the old Tuđmanist definitions. Rearticulating the meanings of the signifiers 'sovereignty', 'nationalism' and 'state interest' was thus at the heart of the new approaches to the de-Balkanising and de-Tuđmanising of Croatia. Therefore, the question of Croatia's state interest was addressed in a new way that stressed cooperation and respect for international norms as a way of supporting the claims about the nature of Croatia's Westernised goals.

The temporal element of othering that is here present is quite different from the radical other found in the way that the Balkans and Serbia were discursively constructed. Addressing its own past and trying to move in a different direction presents Croatia with difficult ethical dilemmas. Its identity comes into question because it is becoming increasingly obvious and important that its present needs to be divorced from its past. Identity thus becomes weakened since it loses a significant level of support for the discourse in the population. In order for the past to be successfully replaced the subject requires a very strong vision of its own future, with clear normative implications.

Similar arguments concerning temporal othering of the subject itself were made by Thomas Diez and Ole Waever.[7] Both make the claim that for Europe temporal othering is self reflexive, in which its own past is presented as a threat, rather than another group. 'Europe's other, the enemy image, is today not to a very

[6] Although Yugoslavia featured in the official discourse under its full name, SRJ (Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia), it was clear to everybody in Croatia that in reality it stood for Serbia. The term 'greater-Serbian aggression' for example, was used when referring to relations with the new Yugoslav Government, as well as Serbia used interchangeably for Yugoslavia in some instances. Relations with Yugoslavia depended on the change in Serbian politics. Another link that can be made at this point is with the Serbian minority in Croatia. Although the minority rights regulations applied to all ethnic minorities in Croatia, it was the Serbs that were on everyone's mind as the most relevant minority group, given the political circumstances.

[7] T. Diez (2004), "Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No 2, Carfax Publishing Taylor & Francis Group, pp. 319-335; O. Waever (1996), "European Security Identities", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp.103-32; O. Waever (1998), "Insecurity, Security and Asecurity in the West-European Non-war Community", in E. Adler and M. Barnett (Eds), *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

large extent 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'the Russians' or anything similar – rather Europe's other is Europe's own past which should not be allowed to become its future'.[8] This principle can easily apply to the Croatian case as well in terms of the process of othering of the previous regime and some of its actions. However, it is important to note that while many European states have to a large extent come to terms with their role in the conflicts of the past, during the early 2000 Croatia still did not address its role in the war. Its identity was constructed as that of a 'victim' while Serbia was constructed as 'the aggressor'. Its own role in the conflict was, at this point, not questioned and thus the temporal othering of its own identity was not yet complete. I will come back to this point later on in the analysis when the 'victim' - 'aggressor' identities become contested and redefined.

An extract from an interview with Stjepan Mesić conducted during his presidential campaign demonstrates the distancing and othering of the previous regime and President Tuđman, as well as the openness towards Western institutions and a desire to include Croatia in all aspects of international co-operation.

> Q: How do you envisage Croatia's journey into the integrated Europe? What is your message to the Euro sceptics in Croatia?
>
> SM: Our citizens had been frightened by those who used to steal from Croatia. They were frightened of the enemies on the outside, of Europe and of the USA by that measure that Clinton and Madeline Albright were called enemies of Croatia. These things are nonsense and border on a caricature. Europe is going towards further integration, which cannot be stopped. That is to our luck and advantage. Croatia has to find its place in this design but first we must reach specific standards. (…) The world is changing; there is no more conflict between East and West, things are getting more complex. Croatia has to participate in these processes in the world, and it has to promote democratic processes, because that is a part of European standards.[9]

Mesić stresses the importance of being a Western European, democratic country and invokes the civilisational discourse of 'The West' versus 'the East'. Although there is no more Cold War hostility between East and West there is an

[8] Waever (1998), op. cit. p. 90
[9] Interview with Stjepan Mesić, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 17.01.2000, my translation

acknowledgement that certain divisions still exist and that Croatia must earn its place to be a part of the Western world. Participating in Western European initiatives and the spread of democratic values in the region is its goal and part of its emerging Western identity. Furthermore, Europe is progressing with integration. This concept of integration aroused much suspicion among the previous Government for its possible threat to Croatia's newly gained sovereign status in the international community. For Mesić the prospect of integration is not only inevitable but desirable and strongly encouraged. Croatia has to find its place in the increasingly integrating Europe in order to fully participate in the events of world politics. Democratic processes that Europe promotes are thus vital for Croatia's own development and in order to further redefine the idea of progress the two discourses become inseparable.

Another interesting feature that the quote demonstrates is the division between the 'thieves' of the previous regime and the present. The opening of the statement at first glance may seem unrelated to the question asked by the journalist. The President brings up the fear of the international community that was present during the 1990s, as a consequence of the HDZ discursive constructions of 'friends' and 'enemies'. Such a discourse is juxtaposed upon the construction of the West/Europe as a positive force in the world, a view the he supports. Invoking the previous regime in order to stress the profound difference with the present reveals the discursive strategies of separating Croatia from the figure of the late president Tuđman, as well as giving meaning to the elections as a sign of radical change. Both discursive strategies supplement the central claim that Croatia belongs in the West, but that it has to work to be accepted there at the same time. Separating Tuđman and the HDZ from the Croatian state as well as 'the people' developed further with the question of the criminalisation of the Homeland War and will be analysed in more depth later on in the chapter.

The strategy of infusing the 2000 elections with a meaning of radical change features throughout the analysis as one of the links between 'the Croatian people' and Western civilisation, and the new regime functioning as the bridge between the two and an on-going generator of democratic impetus in the country.

A third feature that can be extracted from the passage is the manner in which the question of sovereignty is addressed. Sovereignty is here not explicitly invoked but it is present as an underlying principle of the international order: it is a question of sovereign states collaborating and developing together. Croatia as a sovereign state has to work with other states and international actors and participate in the democratic processes. I will now turn to a more elaborate analysis of the connection between the discourse of democratisation and the sovereignty signifier.

The problem of reconciling the demands made by the EU and the political conditions faced at home were soon articulated in light of the question about Croatia's sovereignty. Tuđman's rhetoric equated the independent Croatian state with not being a part of Yugoslavia or any other regional association. Membership of the European Union was at times seen as a positive option but often as a threat to Croatia's independence and its hard-earned sovereign status every time conditions were imposed by the international community.[10] The question of sovereignty and its reinterpretation was discursively used to legitimise the new Government's decisions in terms of fulfilling its obligations, and in return provided space to navigate the risky waters of justifying their actions to the bewildered public. The stress on the need to turn Croatia into a law-governed state was linked to the civilisational discourse, and in particular with participation in international institutions and respect for signed agreements, and thus turned the previous rhetoric of independence upside-down.

The following text demonstrates the relationships established between different aspects of 'The West', and how the subject position of Croatia as a Western entity and a sovereign actor was constructed through the interaction with international institutions and states, and equally, how its emergence as such laid the foundations for deeper cooperation and identification with the Western world. The statement came from Ivica Račan, after a meeting with Carla Del Ponte about the progress made by Croatia and the achieved consensus with the ICTY:

> Croatia accepts and respects all of its international obligations, which include cooperating with ICTY. The new regime wants to show that Croatia has become an increasingly law governed state, much more

[10] By the United Nations, the European Union or the Council of Europe

> than before. That is why we will try all crimes committed in Croatia or by Croatian citizens. The collaboration with the tribunal will be increased with the new available documentation. I am convinced that we will contribute to bringing criminals to justice, regardless whether in Croatia or The Hague. To repeat, we will prosecute criminals – not a nation or a country.[11]

The argument developed in this text unfolds along the lines of establishing links between 'the West' and the 'new pro-European regime' subject positions. The West is constructed around the concepts of international cooperation - respecting obligations - support of justice - the rule of law - trying of war criminals. Each of these elements is also linked to a Croatia that positions itself as taking part in the process of democratisation with the aim of transforming its identity into 'The West' in the future. The role of the pro-Western political elites is emphasised as promoting Western democratic norms and in that way opening the road to the possibility of transformation. Croatia's identity started to develop in opposition to the previous regime, constructed as un-democratic, not respecting international obligations and agreements, and not supporting justice. Croatia's identity as a law-governed state depended heavily upon cooperating with the ICTY. Being capable of trying criminals at home as well as allowing their trials to take place abroad was constructed as demonstrating its maturity and capability to belong together with other Western European countries.

The discursive articulation of 'justice' further emphasises the link between the West and Croatia, and establishes a boundary between the two and the previous regime. The increasing cooperation with the tribunal and the rule of law are here articulated as necessary for the creation of justice, which were lacking in the previous period. Pointing to the 'criminals' that must be sent to trial is the following step in the articulation of the pro-Western position, and will be addressed in more detail in the next section of the chapter. But it is the naming of the criminals that is revealing of the discursive strategies at play, and the construction of Croatia's identity as being separate from the 'criminals' and willing to try them at home and in The Hague. The process of othering in this case involves not just distancing itself

[11] Ivica Račan, *Slobodna Dalmacija,* 6.4.2000, my translation

from the Balkans, but from the undesirable features of itself, which is the Croatian past, a point I addressed in the previous section. This feature will become more apparent in the context of the criminalisation of the Homeland War, and it will be explored in that context later on.

The main question that was on everyone's minds was whether cooperating with The Hague tribunal would erode Croatia's sovereignty. The matter was at first discussed on its own, without explicit links to the Homeland War. The Constitution did not foresee such a situation, and the experts' opinions were divided. A judge from the Zagreb County Court, Damir Kos, argued that the answer depends on whether the ICTY is considered as another country's court or not.[12] However, given that Croatia supported the founding of the Tribunal in the first place and subsequently passed the Constitutional Law that allowed the Tribunal to try Croatian citizens, it can be argued that by doing this Croatia has given up a part of its sovereignty already. It is possible to make that argument if we follow a strict definition of sovereignty as 'supreme authority within a territory'.[13] In this case, international law and agreements are highly problematic and in direct conflict with the concept of sovereignty. Supreme authority would thus be compromised and could not accommodate certain aspects of international cooperation, such as the ICTY. Despite having supported the founding of the tribunal, President Tuđman was very cautious with his actual involvement and always warned against the dangers of losing Croatia's sovereignty.

The new regime embarked upon a different route towards closer cooperation with the ICTY. Their discourse on democratisation that stressed cooperation and transparency employed a discursive strategy that supported the discourse with a different conception of sovereignty. In their view, a country could not be sovereign solely by stating such a fact and receiving a formal recognition from other political actors, but by fully complying with international democratic standards and respecting democratic norms. The new regime's redefinition of sovereignty was rooted in the civilisational discourse by looking for the support and recognition of the Western world, especially the European Union countries. This leads us to conclude that the

[12] Interview with D. Kos in *Globus*, 25.3.2000, my translation
[13] E. Craig, *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Taylor and Francis, 1998

subject position of Croatia as being 'Western European' can only exist if it is recognised as such by the EU and other Western countries. The reconstruction of the Croatian identity thus directly depends on the setting within which it functions: an achievable progress towards EU membership characterises the reality of the subject as being potentially Western, while holding on to the old discourse of sovereignty makes the claims about the Western subject meaningless and contradictory. The following analysis demonstrates the strategies at play and the future opportunities for the development of both the civilisational discourse and the discourse on democratisation and justice.

The former President of the Constitutional Court, Jadranko Crnić, supported the belief that the ICTY working in Croatia would not erode Croatia's sovereignty.

> Croatia as a sovereign state agrees to have an international institution perform judiciary duties within its territory. The future brings more co-operation and less boundaries. There is no diminishing of sovereignty if one agrees to certain actions freely, without pressure.[14]

In this case it is the consent to allow an international court to deal with domestic issues that is interpreted as a case of free decision making. The question of sovereignty is thus directed at a different issue: only a truly sovereign state can make such decisions. Sharing of the judicial responsibility with the international community reinforces sovereignty rather than takes it away. Croatia's identity as a sovereign state is not eroded but highlighted and grounded in the legitimacy that the international community provides.

This important signifier went through radical change in the process. The Tuđmanist discourse positioned sovereignty at the very centre of Croatia's statehood and its national identity. The discourse became relatively sedimented during the period of the 1990s and was difficult to challenge by the new government. It is important to note that although the concept of sovereignty was not completely rearticulated the change in its meaning was strong enough to open the door for the

[14] Jadranko Crnić in *Jutarnji List*, 14.3.2000, my translation

new government to pursue political action deemed to be controversial. I also argue that although they incessantly pushed for the new meaning of sovereignty, there were other factors that contributed to the success of their course of action. Again, the importance of the civilisational discourse and the desire to differentiate from Serbia and the Balkans added more impetus to big changes taking place.

However, the official discourse was engaging with a very strong opposition. Both political parties and different organisations put forward strong arguments against the possibility of engaging with the ICTY. A section of an interview with Branko Borković, who was a War Commander of Vukovar Forces in 1991, and in 2000 was the President of Association of Croatian Defenders of The Homeland War, demonstrates that tension:

> Look at what is happening. Armed representatives of foreign powers are controlling all movement of civilians in Gospić and nearby villages. Is that not an example of disrespecting a country's sovereignty? But the Government says that it is because of the Constitutional Law that binds us to cooperate with The Hague, and that the HDZ is to blame for everything. (…) It is matter of principle that foreign investigators are conducting an inquiry on our sovereign territory and I don't agree with that.[15]

Borković stresses that the people conducting the inquiry in Croatia are armed foreigners who stand in opposition to unarmed civilians and control their daily movements. The image invokes force as the central feature of the power relation here present and it discursively constructs the boundary between the Croatian people and the representatives of the foreign institution, based on the notion of justice. The foreign investigators are constructed as being unjust and not having the right to conduct the inquiry on Croatian soil, while the unarmed civilians assume a subject position of victims of foreign injustice. His argument closely follows the Tuđmanist discourse on justice and freedom from foreign oppression. Just like Tuđman, Borković links the concept of injustice and endangered sovereignty. As long as there are foreigners exercising power within Croatian territory their actions diminish its

[15] Interview with Branko Borković, *Slobodna Dalmacija,* 15.4.2000, my translation

sovereignty and additionally are inherently unjust. This particular discursive construction forms a mirror image to the one analysed previously, that links the concept of justice to the 'shared' notion of sovereignty and welcomes the foreign political actors who have the power to legitimise Croatia's claims to sovereignty as well as its identity constructions as a Western European country.

The question of sovereignty is thus linked to the civilisational discourse in terms of the necessity to be legitimised by the West under particular terms, but also to the relationship between Croatia's past and its present and different discursive constructions of the concept of sovereignty. The analysis of sovereignty and the way it features in the new political discourse opposed to Tuđmanism makes it possible to look deeper into the relationship between Croatia and its other, in terms of Croatia's present and past. It is to this feature that I shall now turn.

5.3. Whose war was it in the first place?

The civilisational discourse outlined and analysed in the previous chapter stressed the importance between the Croatian subject which is constructed as on the way to becoming Western, and the Eastern, Balkan other. The way political decisions were presented was that Croatia *had to* comply with the EU conditions among other reasons, because of its identity as a Western, democratic country.[16] Non compliance would have meant staying at the Balkan level of close-minded nationalism and pursuit of archaic interpretations of sovereignty and state interest. Continuous emphasis that non-cooperating meant returning to the Balkans makes it possible to link the Croatian past and the Balkan region. Both are Croatia's others, albeit one is a

[16] I am not dismissing positivist explanations that stress the importance of material benefits of becoming an EU member state. These factors are also present in the official political discourse. However, this study aims to reveal other factors that increased the sense of urgency in terms of becoming an EU member and which are rooted in the civilisational discourse and the perceived need to leave the Balkans, both in regional-territorial and civilisational terms. As was argued in the Introduction to the thesis, positivist arguments are not capable of explaining phenomena on their own and are in need of more emphasis on domestic factors and the particularities of every case study.

temporal dimension of the Croatian subject, and the second one is a regional and civilizational other.

The following text introduces the tension between the two groups in Croatia, 'those' who are working against Croatia are 'pushing it back to the Balkans', and people who are working for the benefit of the country:

> Some individuals and groups have illusions that they can manipulate the interests of this people and that to the detriment of the Homeland War certain things can be hidden that a democratic and law governed state must not hide. By doing this they are not defending the Homeland War but are causing damage and I believe that the majority of people are aware of this.[17]

The damage implied refers in this context to the previous regime's unwillingness to fully cooperate with the ICTY. A more critical assessment of those events was automatically interpreted to mean disloyalty to the state and to the people. The new regime's rearticulation of loyalty and patriotism stressed the need to know and acknowledge the truth about the past, the need to bring out to the open everything that could potentially harm the country in order to purge it from the ill-doers. The damage is not only isolation from the international community that Croatia suffered in the past, as well as a 'return' to the Balkans, but also hiding of the truth that in itself degrades the honour of the fight for liberation. The following section, belonging to the same text, demonstrates this point:

> I do not believe that in the democratic Croatia can be tolerated those who would want to sacrifice our national interests and to allow individuals and groups to get away with not being punished for what they have done, or for what they are suspected of having done. It is finally time that those individuals and groups show their responsibility towards the institutions of their country and to show how much they respect the fact of the law governed state.[18]

[17] Ivica Račan in *Jutarnji List*, 16.9.2000, my translation
[18] Ivica Račan in *Jutarnji List*, 16.9.2000, my translation

The question of national interests was addressed through the lens of the polarising democratic forces on one side, and on the other side the less-progressive, backward actors who insist on keeping the integrity of the war intact through silence and hiding of the truth. This kind of attitude is defined as being the opposite of the true democratic spirit which generates respect towards one's country's institutions. A part of it is respect towards the lawfully elected Government and the other follows from the Government's decision to engage with international institutions.

Tuđman and his followers only nominally supported democratic practices and institutions. Signing agreements and abandoning them was a standard practice at the time. The new construction of a truly democratic Croatia linked such acts to selfish, self-interested 'those' who exploited the times of crisis for their own benefit. Such behaviour is labelled as being 'Balkan' and not what Croatia must be.

President Mesić repeatedly stressed the connection between following the old way of thinking and being pushed back to the Balkans. Refusal to cooperate immediately takes Croatia back to the Balkans, not only because the hopes of joining the EU would thus end, but because the robbing of one's people and state is deemed to be synonymous with the Balkan way.

> Attacking international institutions takes Croatia back into isolation because a conflict with the Tribunal would mean a conflict with the international community and the UN. Those who speculate in this way want an isolated Croatia once again, and want to see in power those who would be robbing it once again. This refers to all who say to the Croatian public that the world is against us and especially the Hague Tribunal. They have nothing positive for our country on their minds.[19]

Statements of this kind imply that 'The Balkan phase' included not only the fifty years in the Yugoslav federation, but also Tuđman's years in office, although that was rarely openly stated. It is useful to note at this point that poststructuralist principles do not dismiss meaning conveyed in an implicit way, but rather stress the importance of being sensitive to such articulations. What this reluctance to directly mention Tuđman suggests is the difficulty of turning against him to such a great

[19] Stjepan Mesić in *Jutarnji List,* 14.12.2000, my translation

degree. The practice of clearly stating things but not naming any names makes criticism of the previous regime and his leadership easier and more acceptable.

It thus becomes obvious that despite the determination to pursue a new direction in Croatian politics, the importance of Tuđman was not easy to leave behind. It also becomes apparent that his role and image among the people had an important effect and that the political elites had to be extremely careful how they addressed this issue when speaking publicly and when appearing in the media. Nevertheless, linking the Tuđman years with the Balkan other can be studied not just as a usual rhetoric against the previous regime, the new against the old, but as a specific discursive strategy that is based on the reconstruction of the Croatian identity and the rearticulation of the controversial political space. The hegemonising project depended equally on the external support and legitimation and equally on the internal change of the subject position 'Croatian'. The establishment of the boundaries between the self that is the Croatian subject, and the other became not just a question of external other (Balkans and Serbia), but of moving its own past within the domain of the other.

The unnamed 'those' who worked against Croatia and who are still dragging it back to the Balkans are an important element that has direct links with specific policies of non-cooperation with the ICTY as well as not complying with the minority regulation. They form the oppositional discourse that rests on Tuđman's ideas and uses the same language. Because of this apparent similarity it is not difficult to identify them as pro-Tuđmanist and anti-EU forces. They are centred around the idea that international institutions are a negative interference with Croatia's affairs and stand in contrast with concepts of sovereignty and justice, by encroaching onto Croatian territory and questioning the morality of the Homeland War. Mesić discursively links the international institutions and community with Croatia being free of internal enemies (those robbing their own people). Therefore, being against the international community can only take Croatia to isolation and a lack of justice. The President repeats the word 'conflict' and places it between the international community and Croatia's past. The s subject of the past, whose identity was characterised by conflict, thus stands in opposition to the present discourse of

cooperation and is further linked to having negative intentions for the country. The boundary between discourses of 'past-conflict-suspicion-isolation' and 'present-cooperation-trust-belonging to the Western world' is here firmly established as existing between the Tuđman regime and the new government.

The boundary between the present Croatian identity and the other of the past made it possible to discursively structure choices about cooperating with the ICTY. The alternative was presented as isolation and digression in both political and civilisational terms. Splitting up of the Croatian identity between the democratic, Western present and nationalistic, anti-Western past made it possible to address the Homeland War in a new light and to offer an alternative interpretation of justice and truth, based on Western democratic norms.

5.4. Defending the Homeland War and the problem of its criminalisation

After demarcating the new, pro-European forces and their opposition who trailed in the Tuđmanist discourse on Croatian policy orientation, I now turn to the next set of oppositional relationships, between the 'legitimate defenders' of the Homeland War and the 'war criminals'. In the new official discourse the war criminals are constructed as having put shame on the war that is a defining feature of contemporary Croatia and its identity. The old Tuđmanist discourse put forward a very clear-cut division between the Croatian people – the victims, and the Serb aggressors that is now challenged and reconstructed. The following analysis will focus on these subject positions and their reconstruction.

Throughout the 1990s, this particular discursive construction of the victim-aggressor relationship was not challenged until the start of the cooperation with the ICTY in1995.[20] The very nature of the tribunal proved to be difficult on several

[20] In 1995 Croatia signed the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Accords or Dayton Peace Agreement, in which it took the obligation to collaborate with the International Criminal Tribunal for ex Yugoslavia. The peace agreement was reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio, USA in November 1995. It was signed

levels: that of challenging Croatia's sovereignty, and of challenging the victim-aggressor identity construction of Croatia and Serbia. There was insufficient cooperation until the year 2000 when the new regime announced the beginning of a different era in which Croatia would fully cooperate with the Tribunal, in accordance with its identification with Western European values and norms.

The message they were aiming to convey was that Croatian cooperation signified a changed, democratised and civilised entity, willing to reformulate its understanding of sovereignty, responsibility and 'Europeanness'. The discursive construction of national interest did not stand apart from the overall discursive change because the two were mutually constitutive and developed within the given discursive framework. Traditional understanding of national interest focuses mainly on the questions of security and material capabilities. These elements did not disappear in the new government's discourse but were altered in accordance with the new interpretation of Croatian identity. A Western country was expected to pursue security and economic prosperity but within a given framework of democratic norms and values. The question of security for Croatia ceased to focus solely on the possible invasion by the Serbs, and started to include a variety of concerns. Among them was the notion that returning to the Balkans was not necessarily a physical threat to peace, but nevertheless a threat of civilisational degradation. Being accepted fully as a member of the Western world would not just provide protection in military terms, but would offer Croatia a range of securities, from military to economic, cultural and social.[21]

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in Paris on 14th December 1995. It marked the end of the armed conflict in the former Socialist Federal republic of Yugoslavia. The main participants from ex Yugoslavia were Slobodan Milošević, the President of Serbia, the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović. US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher and negotiator Richard Holbrooke led the peace conference together with the EU Special Representative Carl Bildt. The signing of the formal agreement in Paris was accompanied by the French President Jacques Chirac, US President Bill Clinton, UK Prime Minister John Major, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin. Office of the High representative and EU Special Representative, http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=380. Last accessed on 20th July 2009.
USA State Department, *Dayton Peace Accord on Bosnia and Herzegovina*

[21] Negotiations with NATO were taking place at the same time and were discursively linked with EU membership. Both were understood as necessary for Croatia's full development and were equally supported by the Government, using a very similar rhetoric. Nevertheless, EU membership still held primacy in the new official discourse and was presented as fundamental to Croatia's benefit.

The criminalisation of the Homeland War presented an enormous obstacle for the new regime. It was considered one of the foundations of the modern Croatian state and a cornerstone of Croatian national identity. Its discursive construction depended heavily on the subject positions of Croats as victims and Serbs as aggressors in the Tuđmanist discourse, and needed particular constructions of signifiers 'sovereignty' and 'justice' to further legitimise its status. The question of military security was closely related to the war and questioning its nature seemed to question the very essence of the Croatian state and the identity of its citizens. The main point of contestation was the understanding that the ICTY investigations into war crimes committed by Croats would criminalise the Homeland War in general and military operations Flash and Storm in particular.

The following analysis looks into the way the question of criminalisation was addressed in relation to the civilisational discourse of Western cooperation and justice, and the way the Croatian identity underwent further reconstructions in terms of divisions between the war criminals and real defenders of the war.

The question of the validity of the ICTY was constantly addressed and legitimised by the necessity to cooperate with the Hague and by insistence on the European nature of cooperation with international institutions. The following text, an extract from an interview with the Foreign Minister, demonstrates the relationship between ICTY, European norms on cooperation and the notion of justice:

> The Hague tribunal has been established with the good intentions of serving as a starting point of a possible global system that would try war criminals. (…) We have ratified the Constitutional Law on the Cooperation with The Hague Tribunal and are obliged to respect it. But also it is a sign that Croatia is ready to look at the Homeland War and to protect its true values from malign occurrences. Because of the very protection of the freedom that people have fought for, because of the victims, the wounded and all the damage to our country, our legislature had to react with more efficiency towards all criminal actions that endangered the meaning of the Homeland War. The ICTY is our chance now to redefine our attitude regarding criminal activities in the war. I also believe that the ICTY has jurisdiction over the Flash and Storm military operations.[22]

[22] Interview with Tonino Picula, in *Slobodna Dalmacija,* 31.1.2000, my translation

The Minister positively assessed the existence of the ICTY as a possible starting point for a global standard of justice. Croatia has to respect the tribunal and cooperate not only because it is legally bound to do it, but also to show it has the democratic maturity to voluntarily accept the standards of international justice. The discourse on Western civilisation is present in the articulation of the Homeland War as something that has to be freed from criminal activity by correct legislature and efforts. The protection of freedom is here not only a matter of liberation from Serbian aggression, but also liberation from internal corruption, criminal actions and dishonesty. Therefore, the freedom must be protected from the outside with the help of the ICTY, and from the inside through Croatia's own efforts.

The chain of corruption-criminal actions-dishonesty can be clearly related back to the discourse on Balkan civilisation and to the HDZ era of the 1990s. The Minister's criticism of the previous legislature is in line with the process of othering of Croatia's past, analysed in the previous section, in that it employs the strategy of Western identity building upon the notion of inherent compatibility between democracy and freedom and the Western world, as opposed to the inherent incompatibility between the Balkans and democracy and freedom. Tuđman's discourse on freedom and democratic values becomes very much questionable since it overlooked the true values of the Homeland War and failed to keep it intact for the sake of those who suffered in the war and had made great sacrifices. The role of the ICTY then becomes a good in itself because it promotes international norms of justice, but also it is constructed as necessary to Croatia because it can help it purge the Homeland War of negative connotations. Because of its apparent dual necessity and positive influence in the world and in Croatia, the official discourse could further link the developing Western identity of Croatia to the concept of Western civilisation, through the willingness to cooperate, to embrace their values and also by rejecting the past as undemocratic.

The first increasingly difficult stumbling block in the cooperation process was the case of General Tihomir Blaškić. On the 3rd March 2000, General Blaškić was convicted by the ICTY and received a sentence of 45 years in prison for war

crimes committed in about 20 villages in Bosnia.[23] One of the features of the verdict that made it resonate within the international community was that Blaškić was the first officer of such a high rank tried and convicted by an international court since the Nuremberg Trials. He was convicted for individual responsibility and responsibility entailed by the chain of command for crimes against civilians.[24] The judges stressed that although it was not proven that General Blaškić had committed a single crime personally, he was still guilty for not having sanctioned a single offender under his command. Also, the general's involvement with local politicians in Bosnia was taken into consideration and as a consequence his responsibility was not only viewed in military terms. The conflict in central Bosnia where Blaškić was in charge was thus proclaimed an international conflict because Croatia had the command over military and political actors among the Bosnian Croats. The court possessed proof that Croatia wanted to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina with Yugoslavia: evidence of a meeting in Karađorđevo between Tuđman and Milošević in March 1991.[25] This was perhaps the most crucial feature of the trial for Croatia. For years the Tuđman regime officially denied any involvement in the Bosnian conflict, what made it possible to maintain the discursive construction of Croatia as 'victim' and Serbia as 'aggressor'.

The judges justified their strict verdict by stressing that Blaškić ordered a number of attacks in Bosnia, and that he did not prevent or subsequently punish individuals who committed crimes under his command. Judge Claud Jorda stated:

> The crimes that you committed are very serious. These war operations were undertaken without any regard for international humanitarian law and with great hatred.[26]

Blaškić was convicted for crimes against humanity, breaching of laws and customs of war, and breaching of the Geneva Conventions. Although it was clear that

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23 Vitez, Busovača and Kiseljak counties. Villages of Ahmići, Nadioci, Pirići, Šantići, and 16 more.
24 The trial of General Blaškić began in 1997 after he voluntarily surrendered and agreed to the trial. An appeal was made concerning his sentence and in 2004 it was reduced to nine years imprisonment. www.icty.org, last accessed on 17th May 2009
25 www.icty.org, last accessed on 20th Dec 2008
26 The information on the Blaškić trial was retrieved from www.ictytranscripts.org, last accessed on 20th Dec 2008

the General was not the only one responsible for the events and despite awareness of the further need for prosecuting the responsible individuals, the case was a turning point for Croatia. The Blaškić trial provoked very strong reactions at home due to the element of Croatia's involvement in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1992, Croatia recognised Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign state but nevertheless got involved in the armed conflict on its territory, albeit in secret.[27] The case against the General thus stated that the purpose of Croatia's involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina was ethnic cleansing of central Bosnia. The General Blaškić case finally brought the issue of Croatia's involvement in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina out in the open. This step, however difficult, made it possible for the new regime to address the problem and to clear Croatia's name in the international community by taking responsibility for its involvement in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina and by continuing its cooperation with the Tribunal.

President Mesić gave a statement immediately after the verdict:

> This issue is about the requirements needed for the Croatian Army to cross the border. It can only happen if the Commander in Chief brings such a decision, and if the Parliament brings such a decision. And that was never done by our Parliament. At that time I was the Head of Parliament and I never signed a document regarding the involvement in Bosnia. If somebody employed the Croatian Army outside the Croatian borders they were acting against our Constitution. It is a question of individual responsibility rather than the responsibility of the Republic of Croatia.[28]

The President clearly rejected his own involvement in the affair at the time. He does not explicitly name who gave the orders for the army to cross the border, but it could only mean that the orders were given by Tuđman, who was the commander in chief of the armed forces. This distinction polarises those in command - Tuđman and his supporters who did not respect the Constitution, from himself and the current Government that do. By

[27] This occurrence is normally interpreted as the extension of Tuđman's nationalism and of his territorial aspirations to return the boundaries of Croatia from before 1482 when Turks invaded Central Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina always played an important role in his rhetoric of uniting all Croats within the boundaries of their state, which did not coincide with the borders established after the WWII, but included parts of today's Herzegovina.

[28] Stjepan Mesić, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 4.3.2000, my translation

not naming the party that acted against the law, but by clearly indicating about what their identity might be, the audience is invited to draw their own conclusions about the nature of Croatia's involvement and the motives behind the actions. The polarisation between the two is further emphasised by the President's insistence that the matter concerned individuals rather than the entire country. 'Those' who gave orders did so in secret from the people and acted against the Constitution. The new regime represents itself as being law abiding in this context and distances itself from Tuđman by openly addressing the difficult issue and by being willing to point the blame at those who were responsible. Invoking the discourse on respect for law and international institutions falls into the link between signifiers on the Western civilisation (cooperation-democracy-justice), and thus further legitimises the emerging Western identity of Croatia.

However, the Tuđmanist discourse was actively advocated by several oppositional parties and charities that supported the veterans of the war. The following text is an example of their arguments in relation to the verdict to General Blaškić:

> The verdict clearly demonstrates that the ICTY is not interested in justice but revenge towards the Croatian people who stood up to the international community and their wishes at the beginning of the war. I am saying this because of what has been happening recently: not even humanitarian aid can get into Chechnya, Pinochet has been sent free, but Blaškić got 45 years in prison. There is no justice here. On the other hand, the verdict is a prime example of the unclean conscience of the international community that quietly observed Serbia's aggression onto Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and even helped the Serbs at the start. I am afraid that this verdict will divide the Croatian people onto those who are rejoicing, and those who are shocked and angry like us. What is even more dangerous is that operations Flash and Storm are now under the jurisdiction of the ICTY because that will be used as an instrument of political colonisation of Croatia, Bosnia and other places as well.[29]

The oppositional discourse presented here is again constructed around the antagonistic relationship between the international community and Croatia. The international community is accused of injustice and revenge, while the Croatian people are applauded for having stood up to the unjust community. The statement has a heavy

[29] Statement given by Miroslav Rožić of the HSP (Croatian Party of Rights) and Member of Parliament, in *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 4.3.2000, my translation

normative element to it and argues for the necessity to look at other events in the world (Chechnya, Pinochet case) in comparison to which the case of Blaškić seems less grave and inappropriately dealt with. The speaker accuses the international community of having an unclean conscience for allowing Serbia to invade Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina in the first place and thus reinforces the discursive construction of 'Croatia-victim' and 'Serbia–aggressor'. This relationship is further emphasised by addressing the potential division among the Croats between those who support the international community and hence rejoice at this misfortune, and those who will feel anger and side with the opposition. The oppositional discourse in this way directly challenges the new Government's attempts to establish their identity as civilised, democratic and Western European by trying to fill the signifier 'justice' with contrasting claims, and thus claiming it as part of their articulation.

Similar logic of argumentation is found in the statement by Vladimir Šeks of HDZ who claims that: 'The Hague tribunal has become exclusively and primarily an instrument for accomplishing political goals and altering historical facts.''[30] He directly accuses the government of using the tribunal for its own purposes of obtaining political power and of undermining the years of Tuđman being in office by unjustly accusing the late President. The debate on General Blaškić continued along the pro-Tuđman and anti-Tuđman discourse. For example, the leader of a party from the governing coalition stated:

> General Blaškić has come out of this as an innocent victim, a pawn in a game whose strings were pulled by the culprits residing elsewhere. It was known who was pulling the strings and that the Croatian Army headquarters did not act upon military principles but along private lines.[31]

The text invokes the construction of the General as a victim as opposed to those who gave orders and are the true perpetrators. The speaker juxtaposes the Croatian Army that acts according to military principles and those who were in command but did not respect those principles. Again, the question of truth and justice

[30] Vladimir Šeks of HDZ, in *Slobodna Dalmacija,* 4.3.2000, my translation
[31] Zlatko Kramarić of LS, in *Jutarnji List,* 4.3.2000, my translation

is posed and the text suggests that the division between the past and the new regime is real and grounded in truth.

The case of General Blaškić further implied that the war was not entirely just. Involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina was undertaken with the aim of conquering territory. Given that the Homeland War was one of the major features of the creation of Croatian identity, this situation proved to be highly problematic. The evidence of Croatia's involvement made it difficult, if not impossible to keep the reputation of the war intact in the face of accusations. The Deputy of the Head of Government, Goran Granić, addressed the problem of accepting responsibility for the war crimes committed by Croats:

> However, no matter how disappointed we are with the sentence given to General Blaškić, we must not be silent over our horror for the crimes committed in Ahmići. I am ashamed because that crime was committed by Croats. I do not believe that any crimes committed against civilians were made in the name of the Croatian people and state.[32]

It is here that the division between the people and war criminals starts. The Croatian people who were the true defenders of their country are here clearly separated from the crimes and those individuals who committed them. This statement that divided the Croatian people from war criminals further deepened the discourse on the nature of Croatia. It was 'the people' who fought for freedom under the rule of international law and regulations who could claim to be truly Croatian, and who represent the values of the Croatian people. One of those values is being horrified by the brutality of war and sympathising with the victims. This particular discursive shift is present in the minority protection discourse as well and will be analysed further in the following chapter. Special attention will be paid to the role of the Serbian national minority and the way its identity was reconstructed in the minority protection discourse.

Breaking with the Croatian self-presentation as 'victim' and extending the category to the Bosnians who also suffered in the war marks an important point where the Croatian identity splits even further. It lets go of the 'war criminals' who are represented as brutal

[32] Goran Granić, The Deputy Head of Government speaking at the Parliament during the debate on the Declaration on Collaboration with the ICTY, *Jutarnji List*, 15.4.2000, my translation

and blood thirsty, and articulates itself as sympathising and civilised. The crimes could not have been committed in the name of the Croatian people and the Croatian state because those people and the state are civilised and understand the ethical implications of the discourse. Publicly expressing the horror over the crimes in Bosnian villages thus helped glue the community together; it helped distinguish those who fought for freedom, and those who murdered and destroyed towns for their own reasons. 'Those' who led Croatia into isolation and kept it in the Balkans were the same as 'those' who gave orders to the army to cross into Bosnia. The thickening of the divide between Croatia and its own other thus got even more complex as it involved the temporal as well as an ethical element of differentiation.

The implications for poststructuralist theory become evident here as well. The process of othering has assumed a completely new level and demands from us to raise questions about the very nature of the subject under examination. In this case, the subject's identity was forced to be fundamentally reconstructed. The formerly unified Croatian identity was divided between two groups, one that holds a positive identity ('the people', 'defenders') and the other that holds a negative identity ('war criminals', 'aggressors'). The group with the negative identity then crosses the boundary and becomes the other. In this way the subject is constantly redefining itself and reconstructing its identity against a number of features that at different points in time were a part of its own identity. This development confirms the importance that the temporal other plays in identity construction discussed previously with reference to the work of T. Diez and O. Waever.[33] Their discussion of temporal othering in the case of Europe has a very strong normative element to it. The same is the case here, where distancing from the past is done on the grounds of ethics. Just like Europe after the Second World War, Croatia had to acknowledge its responsibility in the conflict and make sure that history does not repeat itself.

Looking within, the subject separates from the negative aspects of its own self and looks for ways to make the new identity legitimate in the eyes of the international community, but at the same time seeks to remain recognisable. The process of othering thus becomes an increasingly internal, reflexive process. Another element of this development can be perceived in the nature of othering. As discussed in chapter two,

[33] T. Diez (2004) and O. Waever (1996, 1998), op. cit.

othering has been traditionally studied as a relationship between the self and an other which is a radical other. This thesis seeks to challenge that approach and in doing so demonstrates various types of other as a result of this complex process. The internal other is evidently not a radical other but has developed from a different logic of differentiation. Similarly, the changing representations of Serbia – the radical other, lead to a less radical identity that at times comes very close to the identity of the subject, which is in this case articulated as 'victim of the war'. This particular feature will be analysed in depth in the following chapter in the context of minority protection. Both non-radical others, Croatia's past and Serbian victims demonstrate that it is necessary to pay close attention to the concept and the way the process of othering works in different settings. This point is further elaborated in the following analysis of text.

An interview with General Martin Špegelj, who was Croatia's first Minister of Defence, demonstrates the divisions in the Croatian identity discourses. The interview was conducted after the sentence to Blaškić was issued and wanted to clarify the circumstances in which war crimes happened in 1991. I extract the following sections:

> Q: Was it possible that crimes against civilians in 1991 happened by accident?
>
> MŠ: Everything had a reason, there were no coincidences. It was not possible that after Operation Storm hundreds of villages were burned down and that those in command did not see it happen. There must have been an approval, at least a silent one. Why were 183 houses demolished in Bjelovar in 1991 although they were far away from the battle lines? A part of political leaders of that time were behind that and are responsible for those crimes: for landmines, for arson, and for murders. They are responsible for genocide. (…) All those people who committed crimes, organised them or made them possible by the nature of their responsibility of being in command we must put on trial and we must clearly say to them: this is not Croatia, these are not the real defenders, but people who are deeply immoral and even criminals. This is the only solution, we have no other choice. This shame must be washed off so the enormous effort that went into defending Croatia would stay unspoilt.[34]

On the one hand, General Blaškić blamed the chaos caused by poor organisation of defence in 1991 as a cause of murders of civilians, as well as the recruiting of

[34] An interview with General Martin Špegelj in *Jutarnji List,* 3.5.2000, my translation

criminals among Croatian émigrés that were allowed to loot and kill for their own purposes, but under a mask of national interest. On the other hand, General Špegelj started to organise defence in 1990 and had a plan of having a professional army with a clear system of command and strict discipline. He did not expect to also deal with volunteers, especially those with a criminal file:

> The other reason that made possible crimes against civilians was the arrival of people with criminal files. At the beginning of the war many came, started over-emphasising their love of Croatia and carrying photos of Ante Pavelić around.[35] Local boys prone to criminal activities were also recruited and from this milieu were created groups that carried on executions. They went into action during night time, for their own benefits, and during daytime they hid in basements. If everything is done in the name of a nation, in the name of defending Croatia, why would anyone ask why some Serb was killed at the moment when the country is being defended?[36]

One of the central features that becomes apparent in this interview extract is the nature of the subject position of a 'victim'. Traditionally, the old Tuđmanist discourse only allowed the possibility of Croats to be the victims of the war. An alternative view that nominates Serbs as victims as well resurfaced with the new regime's rearticulation of the relationship between Croatia and the Balkans, and by allowing for the possibility of reconstructing Croatia's identity, especially its subject position of 'victim'. Serbs could be victims in cases when those who committed crimes against them were not acting in the name of the Croatian state and its people. The statement shows the hierarchy of concepts that influenced subsequent decisions: the liberation of the Croatian state could justify anything, since it was done in the name of freedom. However, separating the legitimate defenders from suspicious characters with criminal files made it possible to open up the 'victim' category and include non-Croatian nationals. Civilians are finally equated in their suffering and granted the status of 'victim' regardless of their ethnicity. General Špegelj stated:

[35] Head of the Croatian separatist movement 'Ustaše' during the 1930s, and Head of the NDH state - *Independent State of Croatia*, between 1941 and 1945; Pavelić was closely associated with both Mussolini and Hitler.
[36] Interview with General Špegelj, *Jutarnji List,* 3.5.2000, my translation

> It is important to find out the truth. These are the steps of clearing our conscience that is needed for the survival of Croatia. Only in this way Croatia can become prosperous and it would be very dangerous if we neglected this fact. The true danger lies at this moment in sweeping things under the carpet, rather than in manipulated mass protests.[37]

By acknowledging the importance of separating these two groups, and further redefining its identity, Croatia makes it possible to prosper and develop its democratic standards: to pursue its goal of joining the EU with a clear conscience. Not doing that was seen as more dangerous than mass protests aimed against the ICTY and the government.

The problematic feature of the ICTY trying Croats as well as Serbs induced a highly charged debate on the possibility of criminalisation of the Homeland War. In April of 2000, the Parliament produced a Declaration on Cooperation with the ICTY.[38] The debate on the Declaration was difficult given the controversy that surrounded it. The consensus was only reached after the main opposition party, the HDZ walked out of the Parliament and refused to vote. The Government's proposal for the Declaration had to exclude the part on the protection of the value of the Homeland War, due to the parties' request. The value was considered to be unquestionable. The Deputy of the Head of Government, Goran Granić, tried to convince the participants that 'the Declaration will not only mean a crucial step forward in co-operating with ICTY, but it will be a civilisational step as well, in terms of Croatia's responsibility for what happened on its territory.'[39] Granić thus rejected the possibility that accepting the Declaration would lead to criminalisation of the Homeland War and stated that the status of the War is not questionable for the government in any way.

The HDZ did not accept Granić's arguments and accused the government of allowing the possibility through the Declaration to endanger the value and nature of the Homeland War, and accused the Tribunal for working against Croatia under the influence of power players. The old rhetoric of Croatia that supported the discourse on Croatia as the victim of the war, and the new regime's discourses on responsibility,

[37] Interview with General Špegelj, *Jutarnji List*, 3.5.2000, my translation
[38] The Declaration was accepted on 13th April 2000
[39] G. Granić, *Novi List*, 17.4.2000, my translation

democracy and justice clashed again with regard to the question of what constitutes civilised behaviour of a European country. The following interview with the President of the Association of Croatian Veterans challenges the division along the lines of war criminals versus legitimate defenders category, as well as the civilised versus backward mindset of foreign policy making:

> Q: Until recently those in power used to say that in a war of defence it is not possible to commit crimes. But now The Hague is full of Croats and the Homeland war is increasingly talked about as a crime.
>
> BB: That is a big problem. Reading the papers one would get an impression that we who defended our country are being forgotten, just like all of those cities: Vukovar, Pakrac, Petrinja and Gospić, and it seems like we have forgotten the pride over Flash and Storm. For five years almost half a million Croats wore the uniform. Are all of us now criminals? The people should wake up and say 'Enough'.
>
> (…) All defenders groups are now in unison and support the protection of the Homeland War and of the Croatian soldiers, but also want to protect the county. Accepting the Declaration does not only mean doubting the war to have been necessary, but also a degradation of the Government, the Parliament, the Constitution and finally, the whole of Croatia.[40]

The speaker identifies the veterans with towns and villages that suffered much damage in the conflict. The names of the towns are well known to all Croats and invoke powerful images of suffering, struggle, and destruction of lives and property. His question whether all those people who fought in the war should be equated with criminals demonstrates the complexity of identification between the Homeland War, Croatia and its people. This understanding of justice does not question the nature of Croatia's involvement in the war but focuses only on the grief of the Croatian people. Although such claims and positions can surely be understandable and not taken lightly, the discursive construction reveals the fundamentally Tuđmanist articulation of truth about the Homeland War, and the exclusion of other ethnic groups from the subject position of 'victim'.

[40] Branko Borković, Commander of Vukovar Forces in 1991, and in 2000 President of Association of defenders of the Homeland War , in *Slobodna Dalmacija,* 28.4.2000, my translation

Another element worth examining in this text is the construction of boundaries between the veteran groups and the Government's Declaration. Taking a stand against the Declaration meant not only uniting under the same banner of 'defenders of Croatia' but also an attempt to save the Government and the Parliament from committing a mistake through the Declaration and compromising their positions. Standing up for the war was constructed as standing up for the country and the Croatian people.

In response to the strong oppositional discourse that challenged the government's attempt to further intensify collaboration with The Hague, President Mesić openly addressed the accusations that collaboration signified the criminalisation of the war.

> In a cheap way some are attempting to accuse the ICTY for criminalising the Homeland War. But that is not correct; it is not true that insistence on the responsibility in the line of duty criminalises operations Flash and Storm. This responsibility cannot be stretched that far. Anything that would be attempted against collaborating with The Hague would mean working against the interests of Croatia.[41]

His interpretation is done in the light of strengthening Croatia's national interest constructed as belonging to Western European institutions. The discourse strengthens the articulations of extreme positions of the Balkans versus the EU/West. The question of criminalisation of the Homeland War was crucial for any further steps that could be taken in relation to the ICTY.

Head of Government, Ivica Račan stood up in the defence of collaboration by employing similar discursive strategies to those used by the president:

> Although I stated clearly that the documents concern only what happened in Bosnia, some people managed to involve the Homeland War in this story, as well as operations Storm and Flash. They have not done anyone a favour. Calming the situation at home will help both Croatia and those who are to be tried at The Hague. Things can be cleared only through co-operation and dialogue, and not by asking for more conflict between our country and the ICTY, which is advocated by certain marginal political groups.[42]

[41] Stjepan Mesić, *Jutarnji List*, 1.9.2000, my translation
[42] Ivica Račan, *Jutarnji List*, 11.3.2000, my translation

Again, the 'marginal political groups' threaten to engage Croatia in conflict rather than cooperation by twisting the truth about Croatia's cooperating with the Tribunal. Involving the Homeland War and operations Storm and Flash in the wider debate about legitimate military action would make it possible to accuse the opponents of betraying the country and its people. The official government discourse once again acted along the division between 'those' who work against the country (and in this case who are trying to promote the fabricated link between Croatia's involvement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the legitimate military operation), and those who want to tell the truth about what happened. Dialogue and cooperation are stressed as a 'civilised' way, rather than the uncivilised, Balkan desire to cause conflict and discord. 'We will defend our interests through dialogue. Croatian independence, the Homeland War, operations Flash and Storm must be defended by clear separation between our national defence and crimes committed by individuals', Račan insisted.[43] He criticised the previous government for failing to do the same:

> These crimes should not have been hidden behind our honourable fight for freedom and the mistakes made there only harmed our country. This Government will not repeat these mistakes. Croatia will not allow that those who committed crimes freely walk around because that would disgrace what we call the Homeland War. Taking action will be the best defence of Croatian independence. Everything else is against Croatia; it is a conflict with Croatia, and against our desire to have a normal life. [44]

The honour of the legitimate fight for freedom and Croatian independence are invoked against the individually committed war crimes that bring disgrace to all Croatian people. The 'normal life', so often invoked in the new discourse, was surely not the Balkan life, but something that was to be found in the democratic structures of the Western, civilised Croatian state. The relationship between the backward Balkans and the progressive West was further emphasised in the relationship between Serbia and Croatia.

[43] Ivica Račan, *Jutarnji List,*11.3.2000, my translation
[44] Ivica Račan, *Jutarnji List,* 10.3.2000, my translation

Zdravko Tomac, a prominent member of the Social Democratic Party, commented at a party meeting:

> On the one hand, we are being criticised for betraying our national interests, for creating a banana republic, and that we accept unconditional dictation of the international community. Others say that we do not want real changes in Croatia and that we are taking the country back into isolation because we are not accepting unconditional cooperation with The Hague. We have to reject all of these pressures. The Homeland war must be defended against equalising it with the Great-Serbian aggression[45] and those who are directly responsible for war crimes should be tried both at The Hague and in Croatia.[46]

Two important points emerge here: the Homeland War must not be identified with the Greater-Serbian aggression, and war criminals should be tried in Croatia as well as in The Hague. Trying the war criminals at home shows the willingness to contribute to the seeing of justice, which then adds to the clearing of the Homeland War's reputation as a just and honourable war, unlike the Greater-Serbian aggression, which was purely a desire to conquer foreign territory. Cooperating with the ICTY and trying one's own nationals thus further separates the Western mindset from that of the Balkans, which is tied to rhetoric of history, land and national bonds, and does not accept civic duties and responsibilities, embodied in international institutions. The same view was expressed by President Mesić:

> It is about time that people in this country understand: we do not have many democratic traditions but we want European standards and we must fight for them! We will not allow that the street resolves what should be resolved by the institutions of this state! Those who are now defending the dignity of the Homeland war must understand that they should defend the institutions of this country as well. Those who fought for Croatia also fought for the autonomous working of the institutions of the Croatian state.[47]

[45] The term 'Greater-Serbian aggression' refers to the naming of Milošević's politics of Serbian expansion by Tuđman et al.
[46] Zlatko Tomac, *Jutarnji List*, 2.9.2000, my translation
[47] Stjepan Mesić, *Jutarnji List*, 16.9.2000, my translation

Linking of the state institutions to the dignity of the war thus reinforced the links between the legitimate and the non-legitimate in Croatia. Those who legitimately fought in the war for the benefit of people and the state now must respect the legitimate institutions of that same state. The question of legitimacy is reinforced by Western democratic traditions, which Croatia must yet acquire. The future (democracy, respect for institutions) is juxtaposed to the past one again and it ties to itself the question of who Croatia is and where it naturally belongs.

5.5 Concluding remarks

This chapter addressed the links between the civilisation discourse that juxtaposes the Balkans and the West in the case of cooperation with the ICTY. The cooperation between Croatia and the Tribunal was centred around several debates: the question of sovereignty, the problem of the criminalisation of the Homeland War and the military operations Flash and Storm, and the nature of legitimate democratic institutions of the Croatian state. This case study also addressed the othering of Croatia's past and re-examining the legacy of Tuđman and his impact on Croatian identity formation. The question of criminalisation of the Homeland War was a venue where old and new discursive constructions of Croatian identity clashed most violently and struggled to fill the signifiers such as democracy, progress and justice with new meaning. The argument put forward is that the discursive change and the challenge posed to the old hegemonic discourse were successful because of their link with the civilizational discourse and the opposition between the West and the East. Linking Tuđman and the Balkans in terms of the civilizational radical other and the temporal other of Croatia's own past was a crucial step in the reconstruction of important signifiers, as well as Croatia's identity.

The sovereignty question demanded a reinterpretation of the meaning of the concept and the way it related to the Croatian situation. The new sovereign Croatia needed to collaborate with international institutions, rather than close the gates and

contract the boundaries between itself and the rest of the international community. Sovereignty ceased to mean supreme authority within a territory in a traditional sense of political authority. It became a way of being recognised in the community of democratic states. Sovereignty turned from a question of authority into agency included in recognition of authority. Only under those conditions Croatia would be recognised as a 'proper' state, a truly modern sovereign state, if it is willing to renounce its control in the name of community, and the recognition it provides.

The criminalisation of the war brought into the spotlight the problem of Croatia's involvement in an international conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. The issue could have been detrimental to the future relations between Croatia and the ICTY, given the fundamental role the war played in the creation of Croatian identity in the 1990s. The official discourse divided the Croatian Self into the legitimate defenders in the war from war criminals who fought for their own benefit and prize. Distancing the Croatian people from the 'war criminals' made it possible to separate the legitimate military action from the non-legitimate.

Rejecting the old Tuđmanist discourse was a way of reinventing the new identity for Croatia. Identifying itself with Western European democratic practices and traditions was a way of ending the previous identification of Croatia with the person of Tuđman. Accepting other ethnic groups as equal citizens was a part of that process, as well as abandoning old definitions of statehood and democracy. The new regime's articulations of what it means to be a truly democratic Western state reconciled old ideas and new circumstances. Defining Croatia as not being a part of the Balkans was a crucial element that made it possible to seek an alternative.

The following chapter will explore the question of protecting minority rights in the light of the same civilizational discourse and the Croatia's desire to adapt to Western European standards, and in doing so to cement its developing identity as a Western European country.

6 The case of minority rights: letting the sleeping dogs lie

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the question of minority rights and the way certain discursive constructions of the nation, the state and justice, as well as the civilizational discourse influenced the construction of Croatian identity in this period of time. In the first section, I will introduce the minority rights question in the context of Yugoslavia and the way the problem of minorities was addressed until the 1990s. I will then proceed to analyse the development of the minority discourse and its relationship to Croatian identity. Despite Croatia's independence and its attempts to embark upon democratisation processes, the question of minorities was still heavily influenced by old definitions and understandings, shaped by communist discourses on majority-minority relations and the conception of justice. These discursive constructions were subsequently modified in the Tuđmanist discourse and tied to the new constructions of signifiers 'democracy', 'the people', 'nation state' and 'Western Europe'. As discussed previously, the Homeland War was fought against Serbian forces and thus increased the difficulty of addressing minority rights protection, given that the most numerous national minority in Croatia after the war in 1995 was still the Serbs.[1]

In my analysis, I will focus on this particular element in the minority rights discourse and demonstrate how the rearticulation of the very concept of national minority took place. The civilisational discourse will again be the starting point of my analysis and will remain present throughout as an underlying force behind the

[1] The results of the census of 1991 numbered 14% of the overall population to be Serbian. The census conducted in 2001. identified only 4.54% of Serbs in Croatia. Source: *Državni zavod za statistiku*, (Republic of Croatia – Central Bureau of Statistics), www.dzs.hr, last accessed May 2009

political discourse. Croatia's reconstructions of its identity as being Western European are challenged by the reality of the social and political needs of its national minorities. In this way, the Serbian other becomes an internal element rather than an outside feature of the Balkan civilisation, which is the case in the ICTY case study. The analysis will look into the ways that the Serbian radical other changed in the process of Croatia's redefining of the above mentioned signifiers, in the light of European influence and demands in this area.

Inclusion of national minorities, especially the Serbs, and their acceptance as equal citizens of Croatia marked a radical change in the discourse of Croatian statehood and its Western identity. My analysis will also focus on the way minorities were discursively rearticulated on the basis of the debates about the Croatian Constitution, and on the problem of the returning Serbian population. The analysis of data follows three interlinked discourses on the question of minorities: the official government discourse, the oppositional discourse that follows the Tuđmanist construction of the Serbs as potentially dangerous for the Croatian state, and the discourse of the minority representatives. As the analysis progresses, the focus is placed on the tension between the official government discourse and the opposition. As elaborated previously, the question of Croatian identity as a key marker of a move towards a specifically 'Western European' country will form the backbone of this study and present the macro level of analysis that connects the various political questions arising at the period of study and the question of Croatia's changing political identity.

Addressing the minority rights question was not of primary importance during the first year of the coalition being in power. Relations with the ICTY and events in Serbia, primarily the fall of Milošević in October 2000, dominated the agenda. The question of minorities was largely neglected and mentioned mostly in a legislative sense, by preparing a bill about minority rights and the way the question was tied to the change in the Constitution, from defining Croatia as a nation state to a civil state. The discourse on the minority issue gradually developed from a general discussion on the nature and status of minorities in Croatia, the Constitution and the definition of the state, towards debates on the question of Serbs, the return of their

property and their status in the country. The Government and the Parliament struggled to find a balance between following European directions on democratisation processes and legitimising their decisions to the public. Breaking with the Tuđmanist tradition that constructed the idea of national interest around the thousand year's dream of statehood and sovereignty was challenging in the circumstances. Cooperating with the ICTY, as analysed in the previous chapter, asked for a fundamental shift in the way the Croatian state and its sovereignty were defined. The case on minority rights developed along similar lines where ideas about the nature of the state had to be addressed and redefined.

The structure of this chapter follows the developments in the year 2000 in a chronological way in order to map out the links between dominant discourses and to offer a clear analysis of the events that took place. This case study differs from the previous one in terms of the importance it was given at the time, but nevertheless demonstrates the relevance of both the civilisational debate and the events surrounding the ICTY for its own development and the close links between them.

The texts analysed in this section are representative of the main points of dispute around the question of minorities between those in power and the opposition. The nature of the conflict was used to legitimise certain claims as well as reproducing the relationship between Croatia and the Serbian other, in accordance with the old Tuđmanist rhetoric and the Western European discourse respectively.

The following section sets the context for the question of ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia that consequently served as the basis of understanding and defining minorities in the Croatian context. It is this particular construction and relationship between minority and majority that developed into a stumbling block between the European Union and Croatia and made their relations tense.

6.2 Minority rights in the Yugoslav context and the new political setting

As discussed previously, the question of nationality in Yugoslavia was very sensitive and something that was seen as potentially dangerous. The Yugoslav project was, among others, an attempt to overcome divisions according to national groups and thus rejected the idea of existing majorities and minorities on the Yugoslav territory. The Yugoslav Federation consisted of five nations (Croats, Serbs, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonians) and two 'nationalities' (Albanians in Kosovo and people of Vojvodina – both autonomous regions within the Serbian Socialist Republic). All were equal citizens of Yugoslavia, shared equal rights and protection and there was no perceived need to recognise a group's rights additionally. A member of one 'nation' had the same rights regardless of the place of residence, whether it was their own Republic or elsewhere. Serbs in Croatia were thus not treated as a minority but had the status of a 'constitutive nation' of Yugoslavia and were in that respect equal to Croats. The same principle applied to the whole federation.

Until the end of the war in 1995 when Croatia reclaimed its land and established its power over the entire territory, there was not much room for discussing the relevance of minorities in the Croatian state. Tuđman's idea of what Croatia should be like after it recovered from the war did not seriously acknowledge minorities. Despite their mention in the Constitution there was no real attempt to include minority groups with 'authentic' Croatian nationals in the political life of the country. Minorities were seen as a threat to the wholeness of the state, especially because the most numerous group were Serbs – an element that was impossible to strip of all connotations from the recent past. In this way, minorities assumed the role of an other and were discursively constructed as being different from Croatian nationals and as a consequence a potential threat to the society and the state. The fact the Serbs formed the biggest minority group only aggravated the situation since the discourse in their particular case constructed a radical other that was linked to the Serbian aggression and expansionist politics of Milošević.

After the elections of 2000, more serious and determined attempts were made in establishing relations with the EU and the status of Croatia in the international community changed dramatically. The new government agreed to implement laws that would secure rights for minorities and hinted at a genuine change of attitudes towards the problem. In a meeting with the representatives of the Serbian National Community in Croatia, President Mesić stated:

> Croatia has decided on the democratic system in which all citizens must be equal before the law and there cannot be a selective approach. No Croatian citizen should feel threatened but all must share the same confidence and sense of security.[2]

The signifier 'democracy' is placed at the centre of relations between the state and its citizens. As a democratic country, it is obliged to respect the law and to offer all rights and protection to all citizens, regardless of their nationality. In this way, the legal discourse is linked to the question of nationality and articulated as being inseparable from democracy. I will look at this element of the changing discourse on minorities in more detail in the next section of the chapter in order to provide an account of several steps undertaken by the elites that subsequently resulted in a changed definition of a nation state, more adept to accommodating a multi-ethnic community.

President Mesić and Milorad Pupovac from the Serbian National Council[3] agreed that 'minorities in both countries have to be bridges of cooperation, and not spaces of conflict.'[4] The new discourse stresses cooperation as the key ingredient to peaceful coexistence. As argued in the previous chapter, cooperation was stressed as one of the defining features of the West in the new government discourse. Cooperation between different national groups is thus necessary in light of the emerging Western identity, both among the Croats and the Serbs, in order to further reinforce the change in identity and to legitimise the claims put forth by both sides.

[2] Stjepan Mesić, as quoted in *Jutarnji List* on 12.11.2000, my translation
[3] *Srpsko narodno vijeće (SNV*) Serbian National Council
[4] Stjepan Mesić and Milorad Pupovac as quoted in *Jutarnji List* on 12.11.2000., my translation

The problem of conflict that Mesić and Pupovac seek to abandon has to become a question of the past. Both the construction of the Homeland War as a fight of Croatian people against the Serbian hegemon, and the Tuđmanist discourse on the radical other of Serbia were drawn into this new discourse and demanded a shift of perspective. Cooperation and respect for law are put forward as foundations for a working democracy, and prioritised above the historical perspective that glorified struggle against the enemy and holding on to the notion of an ethnically pure state.

An increase in respect of human rights in general and for ethnic minorities in particular was one of the conditions for membership demanded by the European Union, defined in the Copenhagen Criteria of Accession. The return of Serb refugees from eastern Slavonia was pressed as a priority for the Croatian government and rapid improvement in actual measures implemented was required. However, there were no steps actually taken at that point in order to solve the refugee crisis. Nevertheless, I argue that acknowledging the importance of recognising the Serb minority as part of Croatian society and granting them rights was a significant departure from Tuđman's discourse of irreconcilable nationalism that supported an ethnically homogenous nation state. The significance of this shift will be analysed in more detail in the following sections of the chapter and the implications for concrete political steps will be highlighted.

The problem of minorities and regulation of their rights in the new, democratic Croatia is something that is closely connected with the question of the nature of the Croatian state and with its identity. As I argued previously, the way the majority-minority problem was dealt with in Yugoslavia had remained a resilient example in practice despite the efforts to move to a Western model that recognises minorities within states. The Serb minority, being the most numerous in Croatia and in a controversial position due to previous conflicts in the region, was in the spotlight. As a result all the laws and regulations were discussed in the political arena with an understanding that it was primarily the Serbian minority Croatia was dealing with, and consequently had to be extremely careful not to grant them too much or too little ground for fear of another political crisis. At first, these concerns were not expressed openly and the question of minorities did focus on minorities generally.

But, over time, the question of Serbs started to be discussed more openly and in explicit terms.

After the elections the country witnessed a rapid change to de-ethnicise its politics and to move closer to the desired model of most Western democracies. In the year 2000, the minorities had altogether five representatives in the Parliament. At the same time, the Institute for Minority Representation was proposed to be abolished on the grounds of its poor organisation and structure, a move that was interpreted by the minorities as the last blow of the old HDZ politics of exclusion of minorities from the political and public sphere.

Milorad Pupovac, the President of the Serbian National Council made a comment in regards to this problem:

> The specific Croatian context demands the recognition of minorities, their identities and their institutions and an end of politics that claims us all simply citizens of Croatia. In the new liberal democratic politics on minorities the basis of citizenship is expanded with mechanisms of protection and promotions of minorities. (…) Thus, Croatia must recognise its minorities not only as a private matter of individuals. The new minority politics must begin with the participation of ethnic minorities in the public sphere at the national and especially local, regional levels where minority rights are actually exercised. The situation at the moment is very bad, in judiciary, firms, in representative bodies and at the executive. For example, many minority representatives have been expelled from the courts and in many local and regional councils minorities are not represented at all, neither according to the civil model nor the ethnic model.[5]

The text addresses a very practical matter that concerns not just the participation of minorities in the public sphere, but their actual visibility. The speaker stresses the importance of the Croatian context: the knowledge about the roots of such a specific understanding of the position of minorities is explicit. The old Yugoslav principle of putting the subject position of 'Yugoslav citizen' above any national identity is now being challenged by invoking a new, liberal, democratic politics of the West that Croatia is aiming to embrace. Pupovac calls for the inclusion of minorities into all aspects of public life as a way to promote and strengthen new

[5] Milorad Pupovac, quoted in *Globus*, 18.3. 2000, my translation

democratic values. Linking the discourse on liberal democracy and the need to acknowledge the rights of minorities is done in a way that positions the civil concept of citizenship against the recent interpretations of majority-minority relationships. This discursive strategy stands in contrast to the official Government discourse that aimed to reconstruct the meaning of 'state' and to move from the definition of 'nation state' to 'civil state' by stressing the connection between the recognition of minorities and the civil state that operates according to Western democratic principles.

In the speech made by Pupovac we can note an attempt of filling the signified 'democracy' with new content by calling upon Western democratic norms and practices but also that his discursive construction missed a significant point; that the particularities of the Croatian context cannot be taken into account and enhanced by attempting to link it to a version of democracy that supports minority protection by challenging the civil model of a state and its construction of citizenship.

It is interesting to note that a democratic model that assumes recognition and protection of minorities is taken for granted to be valid in all Western European states. France in never mentioned in the official and minority discourses as an example of a civil state that addresses the minority-majority relationship in a different way. This exclusion demonstrates the selective nature of identification with 'the West' and its practices. The same was evident in the analysis of the civilisational discourse and cooperation with the ICTY, where particular (or rather abstract) constructions of the European Union and 'the West' were promoted. The EU is constructed as an entity that exists regardless of its particular member states and their particularities.

The minority discourse in this case is trying to challenge the hegemonic discourse about the majority-minority relationship that has become sedimented and difficult to challenge. The contradictions in the discourse, evident in the above text, demonstrate the difficulty of this attempt and the complexity of the problem. Pupovac calls for the recognition of minorities and allowing them to participate in public life. This appeal refers to the end of the Yugoslav model, as well as the unfavourable position of the Serbian minority of the previous decade.

The following example offers another interpretation of the meaning of minority rights, by discursively linking the Italian minority and Croatian majority in the common values of democracy and freedom. Furio Radin, the representative of the Italian minority in the Croatian Parliament stated:

> Our former Minister of Education used to tell me she respected me for the way I was defending the rights of the Italian minority, just as she used to defend the rights of Croats. I told her that in a way I was also defending the rights of Croats, because by defending and protecting minorities I was protecting common values. It is something that in Istria we understand well. In Istria most citizens believe that minority rights are also their rights – the rights that belong to that region. But people from the Croatian Community in Istria do not understand that and are trying to impose the view that minorities have privileges. Minorities, including the Italians, must have additional rights in order to equally and as a community participate in social structures of a given country, in our case Croatia.[6]

What is immediately apparent in this text is the discursive linking between the Italian minority and Croatian majority. Radin compares his position to the one that discursively separates two national communities and points to the difference in understanding of the broader meaning of the two. The former Minister of Education, who was not named, echoed the Tuđmanist discourse that separated national minorities from Croatian nationals in the discursive construction of the Croatian state. The signifier 'state' carried the meaning of a nation state and was further linked to the signifier 'democracy'. The link between the two was constructed as being natural and on those grounds excluded national minorities from equally taking part in belonging to Croatia. The Croatian Community in Istria participates in this discourse in their understanding that minority rights in reality mean additional privileges. This particular element was a strong point of contestation in Croatia at the time and divided the supporters of minority protection norms, and those against.

Radin points to this discourse and challenges it by first positioning the Italian minority as being equal to the Croatian majority at the level of the state. He equates the protection of minority rights to the protection of Croatian nationals' rights and

[6] Furio Radin, as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 10.01.2000, my translation

discursively constructs them as being common values on a more general level. For Radin that is Istria – a region in Croatia with the highest number of Italian minority population of 7%.[7] Istria has been known for a peaceful coexistence between the Croats and Italians since the end of the WWII and during the 1990s witnessed an increased settlement of Albanian, Serbian and Bosnian populations. In Radin's discourse multiculturalism and inclusion feature as central tenets of the discourse and are linked to the Western democratic values of minority protection and tolerance. It is because of this understanding that Radin claims to be protecting common values of all Croats.

His claim that most of the people in Istria hold this belief reveals an interesting construction of their identity. Italians and most Croats in Istria are aware of their national identity but that awareness makes them inclusive and open to others, rather than exclusive. Supporting minority protection thus means supporting the rights of *all* citizens in Istria and in Croatia. The foreign other is thus not a radical other and the process of identity construction in this case revolves around similarities rather than differences. Istrian people, both Italians and Croats, by acknowledging this fact are capable of living in peace and harmony. Their identities as Croats/Italians – Istrians - Croatian citizens, demonstrate a complexity and layering that is compatible with poststructuralist claims about national identity construction. Their discourse accommodates differences rather than uses them as a basis for conflict and animosity and allows for flexibility in interpretation of the democratic norms promoted by the West and the new Government of the Croatian state. In this way the Italian minority in Istria that supports the institutions of the Croatia state and the Croatian national majority serves as an example for the rest of the country to follow in order to develop democratically and to more fully develop the country's Western European identity.

The case of the Italian minority in Croatia could have served as a positive model for other minorities to follow and to embrace their discourse on rights and equality. However, the position of the Italian minority was particular because of bilateral relations between Italy and Yugoslavia after WWII. The Italian minority

[7] *Državni zavod za statistiku,* www.dzs.hr, last accessed in May 2009

had no political power but had their cultural heritage protected. In the Northern Adriatic region (especially in Rijeka and Kvarner) and Istria they had Italian schools, newspapers, community centres and theatre productions. In this way, the Italians were an exception in the Yugoslav context and during the fifty year period enjoyed a status similar to that national minorities had in Western European countries. Their engagement in the political debates at this point revealed a sophisticated discourse on minority rights and responsibilities, as well as a deep distinction between themselves and other minority groups.

A comparison between Pupovac and Radin demonstrates this difference in the way they phrase their understanding on the Croatian situation and solutions to the problem. While Radin offers a coherent stance on the minority question and the way the majority and minorities relate to one another, Pupovac expresses a rather confused position and no answer to the problem. This can be interpreted as a sign of an early stage of development of the Serbian minority discourse and a reflection of the challenging situation they were in. As it will be apparent in the next section of the analysis, the focus of the minority debate will be increasingly placed on Serbia, while the Italian minority will take a back seat. The analysis will demonstrate how the discourse on minorities as a threat was related to the Serbs and how at that point different discursive constructions of the identity of the Serbs developed, as well as discourses on the nature of the Croatian state, progress and justice. The process of othering will be at the centre of the analysis and will be linked to the previous case study, as well as to the civilisational discourse in order to reveal the interconnectedness of the discourses.

The way the debate on minorities was developing in the year 2000 revealed interesting and complex links between the concepts of nationalism and that of the state. The traditional understanding of the necessity to identify and equate the two was slowly changing and a new discourse emerged that separated the idea of one homogenous nation from that of a state. The notion of a citizen was more important in that discourse than national homogeneousness and the example of Istria demonstrated the possibility of overcoming differences through embracing and actively supporting norms of equality, cooperation and tolerance. In the following

section, I will further examine how the concept of minority protection featured in the discourse on the Balkans and the way the minority protection norm was constructed in that context. The relationship between Croatia and the Balkans will then be examined in light of the meaning of minority protection for Croatia and a conclusion will be drawn on the links between them.

6.3 Minority rights and the fear of the Balkans: a crisis of identity

As argued in chapter four, an important element in the debate with the West became an idea that Croatia should work as a factor of stabilisation in the region. The changes on the political scene were distinctively radical in comparison to the previous period and seemed promising in the long run. Discussing the civilisational discourse in this particular context of national minorities will reveal an additional layer of meaning to the complex relationship between Croatia and its neighbours and allow for a deeper understanding of attitudes and discourses surrounding the question.

The recognition of Croatia's success was evident in the hopes and encouragement that its case can serve as an example and a model for Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia to follow, each in their own right, and the notion of Croatia as a bridge that stands between the West and the Balkans was a popular one and often invoked in the Government's discourse. However, despite the desire to be the generator of positive changes in the region and a role model for its eastern neighbours, Croatian politicians expressed their opinions early on about the need to keep certain boundaries between themselves and Yugoslavia. The Foreign Minister stated:

> Political changes in Croatia thus caused excitement in Europe: people showed at elections the desire for positive change. Europe wants us to be their partner who will help resolve the regional problem. I want to stress that we are not being pushed

> into bad political options; they just want us to contribute in clearing things up in this area. We must serve as an example to our eastern neighbours that it is possible to change the government through proper pre-election campaign and by forming certain coalitions.[8]

The 'bad political options' concern a Balkan union of a kind; something to be avoided at all costs. An example to the neighbours is acceptable as long as Croatia has full European support and works as its agent. Being compared to Yugoslavia/Serbia becomes a question of Croatia's Balkan identity – something that is considered the least desirable option for the future. If Croatia is to be like Serbia then it has not developed and democratised, it has not moved away from the Balkans. Accepting its geographical position but with a strong temporal and ethical distance from Yugoslavia was thus understood as the only possible way forward to Europe. Another statement from the Foreign Minister further clarifies this point:

> We have always claimed that we support regional cooperation but that every country should approach the EU membership on an individual basis. There is no doubt about it - we are for good neighbourly relations, which includes our understanding that Croatia connects the Mediterranean, Central Europe and the South-East. On the 3rd January elections were held that signalled the democratisation of our country. However, Croatia has not been accompanied by the democratisation of the region. It does play the part in the EU's ambitions to transform Europe's South-East. That is an important message but we are not expected to be prisoners of the region. It is important to us to be seen as a possible future candidate for EU membership.[9]

The statement explicitly juxtaposes 'the region' - the Balkans and the EU. The Balkans have not followed Croatia into the processes of democratisation and that in itself is a danger: being influenced by the Balkan neighbours would keep Croatia a 'prisoner' in this region where it does not truly belong. The future EU membership and the past of the Balkan prison stand in stark contrast in the discourse on Croatian identity and its political options. This division features heavily in the discourse on

[8] Tonino Picula, interview published in *Jutarnji List*, 28.1.2000, my translation
[9] Tonino Picula, in *Jutarnji List*, 17.2.2000, my translation

minority rights. The number of the Serbian minority posed a problem for Croatia given the nature of its own identity construction that excludes the Balkans. The Serbian minority is discursively constructed as an extension of Yugoslavia/Serbia and thus stands for the Balkans in the midst of a 'democratising', 'Western' and 'progressive' Croatia. Therefore, grating them rights is at the same time a European requirement and a sign of Croatian democratic practice and its identity, as well as a perceived danger of being under the Balkan influence and imprisonment in that foster home of a region. Thus, relations with Yugoslavia/Serbia are closely intertwined with the minority question and must be looked at with equal scrutiny. The minority question does not stand alone as a domestic issue, but is a part of the grander discourse of Croatia as a Balkan or a European country.

Events in Serbia that followed the fall of Milošević and its changing political landscape were of major impact for Croatia and some of its policy decisions. Redefining its relationship with Serbia was not just a foreign policy matter but something that played a role in the minority rights discourse as well. The role of the Homeland War and the question of responsibility are also present in the discourse through Croatia that defines itself at first as being a victim in the war, and later as also being responsible for war crimes, as well as through Serbia which is continuously articulated as the aggressor.

As I have argued previously, the Serbs were constructed as the radical other, the aggressor, the Balkan element in the otherwise Western Croatia. In this context the Serbian minority finds itself in a difficult and a complex situation because their identity is perceived to affect Croatia in more than just political ways. This feature supports the arguments made by scholars who look into the processes of identity construction as interaction between the self (or the subject of analysis), the radical other and a range of less radical otherness.[10] Positioning Croatia within this web of relations makes it possible to examine the process of Western identity construction as

[10] L. Hansen (2006), *Security as Practice, Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*, Routledge, London/New York, 2006; D. Campbell (1992), *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity,* University of Minnesota Press

a complex interplay of different subject positions. The existence of this 'aspirational identity', which is in this case the European Union, provides a pull towards specific articulations of democratic life in the West and offers a context within which Croatia's identity constructions of its others can be justified. The process of identity construction is in this way not simply established around the dichotomous relationship between Croatia and the EU, or Croatia and Serbia. A wide range of identities and relations are present here and form a complex web of meaning.

As will be argued later on, the possibility of change for the radical other offers an alternative to traditional readings of the self and other relationship that is locked in a standstill and difficult to change. I argue that there is a direct link between a change in an established, sedimented discourse and a discursive reconstruction of the radical other. In this case it is the discourse on minorities as being dangerous and undesirable, and the identity of the Serbian minority that supports this thesis. I shall return to this point later on in the analysis of 'victim' and 'aggressor' subject positions and the way it relates to the previous case study.

The existence of a particular discourse in Istria of the Italian minority adds another layer to this relational system. The Istrian population offers a Western element to Croatia and makes it easier to identify itself as already Western European. The Italians in Istria are thus not a radical other, but an other closer to the Croatian subject and to its aspirational identity of Western Europe. However, the existence of Serbs in Croatia challenges Croatia's identity as a 'Western European country' in two ways. Serbs are not Western European people but belong to the Balkan civilisation, and their identification with the Serbian aggressor makes it impossible to include them within the Croatian state as equal to the rest of the population. The Serbs thus remain in the position of the radical other and occupy a marginal space within the discursive structures on Croatia. The shifting of the radical other to a lesser degree of otherness took place in the period 2000-2001 and that change forms the following sections of my analysis.

The complexity of the situation in the post-2000 election period Croatia made it difficult to answer the EU demands without re-defining the relationship with Serbia. The Milošević regime presented a direct threat and the impossibility of

communication. It was Serbia as the most radical other: the hegemon of Yugoslavia, the aggressor, the backward Balkan civilisation. The question of establishing relations with Serbia was thus not only political in a strict sense, but civilisational as well. An interview with Croatia's Minister for European Integration, Ivan Jakovčić, demonstrates this point:

> It is very simple: it cannot be in anyone's interest for Croatia to stay in the same group as countries that are not capable of democratic steps. Just because Croatia has opted for democratic cooperation on the Southeast of Europe it does not mean that it has chosen its regional destiny. We are looking for an individual approach towards EU membership.[11]

The official discourse stressed a strict division between Croatia's geographical location that is the Balkans, and where it truly belongs: in Western Europe and the European Union. Cooperating with neighbours is thus a sign of its European willingness to spread democracy and encourage peace and stability, but at the same time a very clear distinction between itself and the Balkan others is needed in order to enforce its Western European identity. Serbia is articulated as not being capable of democratic change and its identity as a backward, uncivilised entity is a threat for democratic and civilised Croatia. This text is an excellent example of the poststructuralist analysis of the radical other that is constructed as not being capable of change.[12]

The following section looks at the Croatian Constitution and the way the state was discursively reconstructed as civil versus national. This debate is further linked to the meaning of minorities in that context and the way the concept of citizenship played a crucial role in further discursive changes.

[11] Interview with Ivan Jakovčić, from *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 24.5.2000, my translation

[12] A similar point was made by I. Neumann about Russia and its apparent inability for change. I. Neumann, (1999), *Uses of the other: "the East" in European identity formation*, Manchester University Press

6.4 The Constitution and rearticulation of the meaning of the state

The question of citizenship continued to feature in the official discourse on national minorities and offers another fruitful venue for studying the development of Croatia's Westernisation. The previous chapter on cooperation with the ICTY engaged with a debate about Croatia's Constitution with regard to the nature of sovereignty in a modern European state. The following analysis looks at the Constitution and the way nationality and citizenship were rearticulated in the new official discourse. It is at this point that the question of Serbs in Croatia becomes more explicit and is tied to Serbia as an external and internal threat.

One of the problems that had to be addressed regarding the change of the Constitution was the change in the concepts of statehood and sovereignty of Croatia. The debate was placed within the broader question of Croatian democratisation and was linked to a debate about the duties of the President. A desire to make changes that will move the new Croatia as far away as possible from Tuđman's idea on how to organise a state opened up a complex discussion about the very nature of the Croatian state and its people, including the role of the President. Tuđman declared himself to be 'the President of all Croatian people' and stressed national identity as key to the essence of the state and overall unity of its people. As I have elaborated previously, during his presidential campaign Mesić stressed the need for Croatia to change the role of the president and promised to offer a different model – a president that is primarily a citizen of his country, rather than a 'father of the nation'.[13] This move is significant for the study of minority rights because it shows a willingness to move away from the definition of Croatia as a nation state for all Croatian people towards a definition of a state that would include all its *citizens*, rather than *nationals*. This change in the official discourse thus allows for the greater inclusion of national minorities and possibilities for further democratic changes.

The initial dilemma at this point was a distinction between a discourse of a 'nation state' and a 'civil state'. A majority of politicians belonging to the winning coalition were supportive of the definition of Croatia in terms of a civil state, rather

[13] The term applied to President Tuđman by his followers.

that keeping the old concept of a nation state.[14] Vesna Pusić of HNS stated that the request is:

> (…) Understandable and justifiable given that the majority of European states have abandoned the national definition of their states. It was something that was dominant in the 19th century while the idea of a 'nation' was still questionable and thus needed a defined framework. In the modern day of globalisation such a definition has become redundant and even stands in stark contrast with the basic idea of integration.[15]

Pusić positions the two discourses on the nature of the state as being mutually exclusive. The concept of a nation state belongs to the past and is incompatible with the modern era and processes that go on in the world, like globalisation and European integration. The signifier 'state' in the new Croatian context underwent a radical reconstruction and was linked to specific definitions of statehood and democracy promoted in most Western European countries. She defines Croatia as belonging to the Western society that supports the civil character of the state through its links with the European Union. Participating in the processes of integration thus positions Croatia within the wider democratic framework and conditions its democratic legitimacy by the success of the implementation of the civil state discourse.

A different argument but with a similar conclusion was put forward by Mato Arlović of SDP who said:

> At the beginning of the 1990s, when Croatia was fighting for its independence and sovereignty it made sense to define it as a nation state in the Constitution. But after the battle was won there was no need to keep this definition.[16]

Both texts define the concept of a nation state as something outdated and unnecessary. The nation state makes sense at a time of crisis where boundaries and

[14] *Nacional* conducted a survey among the politicians of the winning coalition about the question of the nature of the Croatian state, 3.6.2000
[15] Vesna Pusić in *Nacional*, 3.6.2000, my translation
[16] Mato Arlović in *Nacional*, 3.6.2000, my translation

definitions of statehood are not set and when identity formation revolves around a negative differentiation between the political subject and the other. Croatia's independence and sovereignty had first to be established and then defended between 1991 and 1995. At the time of peace, however, it was deemed necessary to abandon such conceptualisations that were understood as contrary to the concept of integration and progress.

A 'nation state' thus changes from being acceptable and necessary to outdated and unacceptable for modern standards and definitions of statehood. The change of discourse on the nature of the Croatian state is closely connected to the problem of the Serbian radical other. A nation state excluded all possibility to address the problem of its Serbian population as potentially equal to Croats. Moving away from the construction of Croatia as a state for all Croatian people towards a more inclusive entity based on civil values of citizenship makes it possible to redefine the subject position of the Serbian minority in particular and of all other minorities generally. Identifying Croatia as a civil state allows the Serbian radical other to become more acceptable to Croatia, given its lack of threat to the wholeness of the nation. It slowly transforms into an acceptable other that shares Croatian civil identity and participates in the Westernisation of the country.

The Constitution debate was carried out along the lines of the necessity to change the status of Croatia as a 'nation state' into a civil state, or whether it was enough to add to the Constitution a definition of Croatia as a 'civil state'. Interestingly enough, the existing Constitution had a clearly stated definition, a variation from the US Constitution, that 'in the Republic of Croatia the power comes from its people and belongs to its people as a community of all free and equal citizens.'[17] This implies that from its beginning Croatia has been defined as a civil state in which all rights, freedoms and obligations have been defined on the basis of it being a civil state, rather than being based on nationality, gender, religion or ethnicity. The dilemma that emerged in the post-election context on how to define Croatia, therefore had more to do with the recent historical circumstance of Tuđman's practice and his insistence on the definition of Croatia as a nation state,

[17] The Croatian Constitution, Article 1, Section 2.

than to its definition at the Constitutional level. This question was not explicitly raised during the debate, which can be interpreted as the new Government's determination to move away as far from Tuđman's legacy as possible, and trying to eradicate traces of his political practice. The Constitution says:

> (…) the Republic of Croatia is established as a nation state for Croatian people and a state for all other national minorities: Serbs, Czechs, Slovaks, Italians, Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Austrians, Ukrainians and others that are Croatian citizens. They are guaranteed equality with all citizens of Croatian nationality and granted national rights according to democratic norms of the free world.[18]

At the time of writing of the Constitution the most numerous ethnic minority were the Serbs and in the year 2000 that was still the case despite a dramatic decrease in the Serbian population during the war years.[19] Inclusion of other ethnic minorities in the text can be interpreted as an attempt to decrease the importance of the most numerous group on Croatian territory given the big difference in their numbers. It is also important to notice that Slovenians and Bosniaks[20] were not included in the text despite their numbers in Croatia[21], which contributes to such an understanding of the text, and supports the thesis that exclusion of non-Croatian national communities worked as one of the main mechanisms of national identity construction. Including most national minorities in the Constitution but omitting two significant groups has to be taken into account when looking at the very nature of the text.

The question of defining Croatia along national or civic lines is thus more than a question about terminology and appropriate conceptualisation, but a question about constitutive elements of that political and social community. This brings back the fundamental myth of 'a centuries long dream' for establishing a sovereign nation

[18] *Ustavni zakon o ljudskim pravima i slobodama i pravima etničkih i nacionalnih zajednica ili manjina* The Croatian Constitution, written by Franjo Tuđman; my translation

[19] According to the1991. and 2001. census results the Serbian population in Croatia decreased for about 10% . *Državni zavod za statistiku*, www.dzs.hr. Last accessed in September 2009

[20] The term 'Muslim' was used to denote a national group, i.e. Muslims from Bosnia. Today the term 'Bosniak' is used for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are Muslim.

[21] The census of 2001 reported 20,755 or 0,47% of Bosniaks and 13,173 or 0,30% of Slovenians in Croatia. *Državni zavod za statistiku,* www.dzs.hr, last accessed Sept 2009

state that Tuđman used in his rhetoric and which legitimised much of political action during the 1990s. The following section analyses the far-reaching effects of the change within the nation state discourse and the way it was discursively linked to the question of victims of the Homeland War.

6.5 Occupying a new subject position: a difficult journey from victimisation to responsibility

Discursive changes that occurred within the debates on the redefinition of Croatia at the level of the Constitution further influenced the question of the Serbian minority and their status in society. Abandoning the Tuđmanist nationalist discourse as a result of democratic forces promoting a new agenda opened up the possibility of a reconstruction of the subject position of the Serbian minority and their 'role' in the Homeland War, as well as in the contemporary Croatian context.

Events that followed the increased cooperation with the ICTY demonstrated a radically different conception of the Croatian identity, now based on increased identification with Western European values and responsibility towards Western European institutions. The change within the subject position of 'Croatia-victim' into an actor ready to assume responsibility and a more critical stance towards its recent past found its way into the debates on minority rights. The very act of acknowledging Croatia's responsibility in committing war crimes against Serbian civilians living in Croatia between 1990 and 1995 made it possible to reconstruct the discourse on the nature of the Serbian minority on the whole, and their status as part of Croatia's radical other. The discursive links between the Serbs in Yugoslavia and those living in Croatia were unambiguous and seemed rather resilient during the 1990s. The Serbian radical other functioned as an external threat to Croatian security and an internal threat of potential instability within the imagined homogenous Croatian society.

The following text demonstrates the tension between the old discourse and the new ideas. It is an extract from an interview with Andrija Hebrang, one of the prominent HDZ members, that revolved around questions of sovereignty, relations with Serbia and problems regarding Serbs in Croatia. The following extract represents the focus of the HDZ discourse of the time:

> Q: What should the future leadership of the party be like?
>
> AH: Those individuals must be recognisable through their democratic, pro-European and global ideas but with the condition that they stress the dignity of the Croatian people and state sovereignty. (…) The HDZ has remained the only party that in this moment is defending the reputation of our country, and that has been united by their opposition to the criminalisation of the Homeland War.
>
> (…)
>
> Q: You claim that there were no organised crimes during the war and that you had no information about committed crimes. But we now know that your superior at the time, Head of Government Franjo Gregurić, signed a document that testifies that you personally knew about the disappearance of 65 Serbs and 35 Croats.
>
> AH: There has never been such a document. I did not have a clue about this, but even if I did, I am not sure if we would have had time to investigate given that thousands of Croats went missing during that period. Would a document about 65 missing Serbs have caused a stir among us who were engaged in looking for those missing Croats, I really cannot say. But personally I have never heard about these crimes against the Serbs. I think that the parts of our state apparatus that allow such news to circulate around newspapers deserve the most severe criticism, especially because nowadays nobody writes about innumerable Serbian crimes over Croats![22]

Hebrang's emphasis is on the pro-European forces that represent democratic tendencies but at the same time protect Croatia's dignity and national interest. The two stand in contrast given that 'dignity' assumes refusing to collaborate with The Hague tribunal and making sure that the Homeland War does not get criminalised at any cost. 'Dignity of Croatian people' is ensured by clear definitions of subject

[22] Interview with Andrija Hebrang in *Jutarnji List*, 19.4.2000, my translation

positions ‘victim’ and ‘aggressor’ according to Tuđman’s nationalist rhetoric. In his response to the second question, Hebrang blatantly denies any knowledge about the disappearances of the mentioned people and carries on to justify his position by calling upon the ‘victim’ and ‘aggressor’ constructions. Croats (victims) suffered on a grander scale and thus a few Serbian lives could not have *and* should not have been a matter of investigation. He rejects the particular case of 65 missing Serbs and puts them in the same abstract category of Serbs-aggressors.

Preserving the ‘dignity of Croatian people’ here depends on this generalisation and insistence on the radical otherness of Serbia as aggressor. The text is positioned around concepts of state sovereignty, dignity of the people and the reputation of the country, which stand in direct opposition to investigations of the case of missing people. The fact that the investigation is concerned about missing Serbs is linked with Croatia’s loses in the war and interpreted in that normative context. The conclusion Hebrang comes to is that the Serbs do not deserve such attention given that the number of Croatian victims was greater. He also reproduces the discourse that positions the ‘Croatian victim’ against the ‘Serbian aggressor’ against one another and does not allow the redefinition of subject positions and their identities.

Vladimir Šeks of the HDZ employed the same discursive constructions of ‘victim’ and ‘aggressor’ during a discussion on the proposed Tenement Bill that was to address the problem of the return of private property to Serbian citizens who lost their homes during the war:

> By supporting this law you are asking the Croatian people to pay the generals of the Yugoslav national Army for bullets and grenades that killed more than a thousand civilians in Osijek only. The law represents the legalisation of Serbian aggression and it is their reward.[23]

His position is representative of the HDZ’s insistence that any allowances made to Serbs, both abroad and in Croatia equates the aggressor and the victim. Return of property to the Serbian people is explicitly equated with military

[23] Vladimir Šeks as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 20.5.2000, my translation

aggression of the Yugoslav National Army and the killing of Croatian civilians. Following from this logic, it becomes apparent that the relations between Serbia and Croatia are understood as a zero-sum game, where any kind of gain for Serbian people is exclusively Croatia's loss. A second feature of this discourse is the equation of all Serbian people with the Yugoslav/Serbian military and their crimes against the Croats.

A fundamental difference between the official and the opposition discourses lies in different constructions of the subject positions of 'victim' and 'aggressor', and their willingness to individualise their subjects rather than generalise. 'Serbia-aggressor' has no element of humanity and should not be treated with sympathy, while 'Serbia-possible victim' has redeeming qualities and represents a less threatening other to Croatia's identity construction. Opening up the category of 'victim' to include non-Croats who suffered in the war was thus made possible by the questioning of the morality of certain military operations undertaken by Croats. Sending generals to The Hague to be tried was discursively linked first to Serbian civilians who suffered in the war, and consequently to all of the Serbian population in Croatia. The acknowledgement of victims of war crimes committed by Croats allowed a reassessment of the identity of Serbian people in Croatia as something other than the extension of the Serbian aggressor from the early 1990s.

The following text, an interview with the Deputy Head of Government, Goran Granić, demonstrates the tension between subject positions of Croatia-victim, Serbia-aggressor and Serbian civilians-victims in the official government discourse:

> Q: Tuđman used to say that the return of Serbs would diminish the result of the Homeland War. Now we have a situation where his vision is interpreted and used to destabilise the ruling coalition. Is the coalition ready to reinterpret the aims of the war?
>
> GG: First of all, Croatia suffered aggression and the war was imposed. Through that war Croatia achieved its independence and for that reason the war will have its place in the history of the making of our country, whatever the politicians decide to say about the matter. The war was an imperialist attempt and it included an ethnic component. Because of that we have to look at the problem of the destiny of Croatian citizens of Serbian nationality that allied

> with the other side. If we are now looking at this problem solely through the prism of war, we have to ask ourselves how is it possible to live alongside someone who had opted for the other side. By doing so it is very easy to criminalise an entire people and to press upon them collective responsibility. The point of the matter is that war traumas must be overcome and that all citizens have the right to return to Croatia and to enjoy their private property. If they committed crimes they will have to answer for them. It is on us to support Croatia's future, and that means building a civil, democratic society in which national, religious or any other divisions and differences cannot be a privilege.[24]

The question asked by the interviewer openly links the return of Serbian refugees and the threat to Croatian sovereignty. Tuđman's articulation of Croatia as a nation state for all Croats is brought into dialogue and challenges the speaker to reveal an alternative interpretation regarding the Homeland War. The war was continuously stressed as being the founding element for Croatia, and the defence of the country reinforced the perceived right for state sovereignty. A sovereign nation state for Croats was born out of the Homeland War that was fought against Yugoslav forces, as I have demonstrated with the previous example. Thus, Serbian presence within the country is constructed as a threat to Croatian sovereignty. It was an external threat during the 1990s that at the beginning of the new decade turned into an internal threat as well. A relatively small number of the Serbian population that remained in Croatia[25] could have been disregarded due to political circumstances, but the change that came with the new regime demanded a closer look at the problem of Serbs. The prospect of having that particular national minority enjoying rights and the protection of the state was problematic at two levels: a threat to Croatian sovereignty and still fresh war traumas. These elements were discursively linked in all featured examples, both within the government and the opposition discourses.

Granić points to that factor when asking a rhetorical question about one's ability to live alongside the enemy. He then makes a transition into a discourse that

[24] Interview with G. Granić, *Jutarnji List*, 26.4.2000, my translation

[25] At the time of writing the figure of the remaining Serbian population throughout the 1990s was still not known, and the number of Serbs expected to return post-2000 was also a rough estimate of some 17,000 people. The census of 2001 numbered 201, 631 Serbs living in Croatia. It is important to note that the census offered an option not to disclose one's nationality and/or religion.
Državni zavod za statistiku, www.dzs.hr, last accessed September 2009

distinguishes between collective and individual guilt and responsibility in the war. This articulation mirrors the one of responsibility towards justice and the need to distinguish between the legitimate defenders of the Homeland War and war criminals. Granić aligns himself with the established discourse on the Serbian responsibility in the war and supports the discourse on the war as being one of liberation from Serbian aggression. The fundamental difference from the oppositional discourse is visible here in the ability to distinguish between the responsibility of Serbia, its leaders and its military and the civilian population. This feature of the official discourse was radical at the time and deemed to be rather controversial. I argue that his discourse demonstrates a maturity that allows the expansion of the subject position of 'victim' and the questioning of some aspects of Croatian's fight for liberation. And, at the same, time upholds the belief in the righteousness of the Homeland War and its importance for Croatia's identity building.[26]

The text suggests that the Serbs that have stayed in Croatia - as long as they are innocent - and those that have chosen to return are here constructed as individuals and as human beings who have suffered as much as Croats. They are also constructed as citizens of Croatia who, on that basis, have the right to enjoy the protection of the law that includes the rightful return of their private property. Understanding their rights in this way is a Western and European feature, a sign of Croatia's democratic maturity and a way to build bridges between national groups in the country. Including the Serbs into the category of 'victim' was here discursively linked with the legalist discourse on the nature of citizenship in a democratised Croatia. The Serbian radical other thus *had to* change in intensity and to start occupying a different spot on the 'otherness' spectrum.

Addressing the minority question from the position of a civil state discourse continued to occupy the ruling coalition. Željka Antunović, Deputy Head of Government, stated: 'All who suffered in the war are equal to the Government: both Croats and Serbs'[27] Her statement made the headlines and was equally criticised and

[26] This discourse was eventually accepted by the HDZ as well, under the leadership of Ivo Sanader in 2002

[27] Željka Antunović as quoted in *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 20.5.2000, my translation

applauded for its message. The equation of Croats and Serbs and their construction as both being victims made a break with the tradition that constructed Croats as victims during their conflict with Yugoslavia and Serbs as aggressors. Individualisation of responsibility in the war and the re-definition of Croatia as a civil state provided grounds for changing the victim-aggressor subject positions. Nationality ceased to be the grounds for such definitions and the Serbs as civil subjects could hence be equated with the Croats. Furthermore, their positions as 'victims' were legitimised by a moral obligation by the state to cater for those who suffered.

In the same vein, during an official visit to Austria the President called on the refugees to return:

> Croatia is calling all its citizens to return to their homes. It is our obligation to repair all homes ruined in the war. The return of the Serbs is of great importance because it shows the maturity of our democracy. That means that it is primarily our interest and Croatian citizens will be able to recognise that.[28]

The statement calls on Croatian citizens to return to their homes without explicit mention of their nationality. All citizens are equal for the state (and the state is civil and democratic) and providing means to help them return home is an obligation of the state, which will confirm its identity as being democratic. National interest is redefined and instead of sovereignty the President stresses democracy as being the main goal. He also reveals an awareness of the process of Westernisation and democratisation that Croatia went through. The President stresses that recognising the rights of the Serbian population demonstrates that Croatia has indeed matured and become a Western country. Acknowledging rights of all its citizens, regardless of their ethnicity, is a part of that maturity.

In another statement the President calls upon democracy and the law to ensure the rights of its citizens, regardless of their nationality:

[28] Stipe Mesić as quoted in *Novli List*, 22.2.2001, my translation

> Croatia has chosen a democratic system in which all citizens must be equal and have equal rights before the law. There must be no preferential treatment of any kind. People in Croatia must not feel threatened but all must share the same destiny as citizens of Croatia.[29]

All of these texts demonstrate a unity that is primarily manifested as respecting the civil nature of the Croatian state and the equal status of Croatian and other nationalities. Furthermore, the question ceases to be the one of nationality but is articulated as an exclusively civil matter. The intensity of the statements and the resolute tone about such a sensitive issue suggests that perhaps the cracks within the discourse on citizenship can be found there. Discourse theory suggests that overemphasising a discursive construction and taking it to an extreme demonstrates weaknesses within that discourse, rather than cohesion and strength.[30] It can be argued that, because of this, the official government discourse ought to be doubted and questioned on the grounds of its authenticity and its purpose. However, I argue that despite the obvious cracks within the discourse on citizenship and national minorities we can still investigate it as an attempt to embrace Western democratic norms on minority protection. All of the debates were an early attempt to address the minority question in light of intense cooperation with the European Union and a difficult task of reconciling the new discourse on equality with old nationalist tendencies.

The following text represents a discourse rooted in the Tuđmanist tradition belongs to Marinko Liović, president of HVIDRA[31], who expressed his opinion on Government decisions regarding the return of Serb refugees:

> If we do not establish a dialogue with the Government by the end of the month, we will take action and organise protests. We do not want the Government to finance the return of Serb refugees at our expense. We protest against this insistence on the complete return of Serbs who fled Croatia between 1991 and 1995. They have

[29] Stipe Mesić as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 12.11.2000, my translation
[30] Hansen, *Security*, op. cit.
[31] HVIDRA- *Udruga hrvatskih vojnih invalida Domovinskog rata* , Association of Croatian Disabled Homeland War Veterans

> been forgiven, while our defenders are expecting to be called to The Hague.[32]

The return of the Serbs refugees is equated with Serbian aggression and their responsibility for the war is collective rather than individual. Here we witness a radical other that is not capable of transforming. The discourse equates the Serbs outside and within Croatia, regardless of their differences in subject positions, which are apparent in the official government discourse. Their presence in Croatia is constructed as a threat and follows the logic of the Tuđmanist discourse that positioned Serbia at the extreme end of civilisational otherness. Assuming that the returning Serb refugees have been forgiven for Serbia's transgressions in the Homeland War the text reproduces Serbia's identity as 'aggressor' but at the same time insinuates the possibility of their position as 'victims' by admitting that they had to flee their homes to find safety. At this point it is possible to identify a weakness in the oppositional discourse and to find space for the generating of the subject position of 'Serbs – victims of the war' subject position and the possibility for a change in the extent of their otherness. Another element of the oppositional discourse is revealed in this example. The discourse on the return of the refugees is here directly linked to the discourse on the ICTY and Croatia's position as 'victim' of the international community and of the Tribunal in particular is stressed. The discursive links between the two rest upon the concepts of endangered freedom, injustice found at home and abroad and strong binary oppositions between Croatia and its others. At this point the 'victim' position is twofold: Croatia is a victim of Serbian aggression and of unjust trials at The Hague. The relationships between the subject and its others can be analysed as Croatia against the international community, the Serbs and its own government.

[32] Marinko Liović as quoted in *Jutarnji List*, 5.5.2000, my translation

6.6 The status of minority languages

The question of minority languages was addressed from the same subject position of 'victim' towards a more general 'aggressor'. Drago Krpina of HDZ stated that 'in the course of Croatian history Italian, German and Hungarian languages were used as mere instruments by imperialist attempts towards Croatia.'[33] He implied that the hegemons of the past (Italy, Austria, Hungary) imposed their languages upon the Croatian people and made them official languages in Croatia. He then linked the past with more recent events:

> The Serbian minority in Croatia is an example of how a minority can become an instrument of aggression in a country. Serbs in Croatia have never really spoken Serbian and have not even been asked by anyone whether they want to use the Serbian language and the Cyrillic alphabet.[34]

By using an example from Croatia's past of being under foreign rule for centuries, the speaker identifies the present situation where the Serbian minority is facing a possibility of officially using their language with imperialist tendencies of the past. The use of language is thus constructed as being closely linked to political power and expansionist tendencies. Croatia is positioned against two enemies in a relationship of othering that revolves around a set of binary oppositions. Both others (hegemons of the past and today's Serbian population) occupy subject positions on the extreme points of the othering spectrum. The hegemons of the past and the Serbian minority have nothing in common except that they are discursively linked in the oppositional/Tuđmanist discourse as enemies of Croatian people and constructed as having an inherent identity as such.

The central point that Krpina makes is the threat that the Serbian minority presents in Croatia by its very presence, and consequently by demanding protection of minority rights. Preventing the use of Serbian language would silence their

[33] Interview with Drago Krpina, *Jutarnji List*, 28.4.2000, my translation
[34] Interview with Drago Krpina, *Jutarnji List*, 28.4.2000, my translation

presence and make it invisible to the Croatian majority that needs to feel protected from possible Serbian imperialism, this time not by acts of aggression from abroad, but from their presence inside. The act of using one's language is thus not merely a form of expression in one's mother tongue, but a subversive instrument that can pose a serious threat to the state.

The oppositional discourse does not offer a clear picture of how that threat exists and in what way the Serbs are potentially dangerous, but remains at the level of abstraction. It is implied that the Serbian minority is so closely connected with the Serbian state that consequently they cannot be primarily seen as Croatian citizens, but a part of the radical other. It thus follows that any presence of Serbia at home is potentially a threat. In this way, sovereignty is again invoked as being one of the central concepts of Croatia's identity constructions that ties together the 'victim', the 'aggressor' and determines a range of self and other positions in-between.

An interesting point is made by the speaker when referring to the Serbian minority that has never used the Serbian language and the Cyrillic alphabet. The claim attempts to reconstruct the Serbian identity and to strip it of all those elements that are associated with a national community. If the Serbian minority had never really spoken their language in Croatia and used their alphabet then there is no reason to start doing so at present times.[35] Doing so only confirms that the Serbs really are a threat by making their presence in Croatia known and so having an opportunity to increase their demands. A need for temporal continuity is invoked as a legitimating factor in the discourse with the purpose of de-legitimising Serbian demands. If suddenly the Serbian minority starts officially using their language and alphabet that can only point to a certain weakness of the state and the minority's ambitions to undermine the perceived homogeneity of Croatian citizens.

[35] The census of 2001 produced interesting results regarding the use of minority languages. Only 1% of the overall population responded that they spoke Serbian at home, which makes it about one quarter of all Serbs in Croatia to have responded in that way. 89, 63% of the population stated their nationality to be Croatian and 96, 12% of the population stated that Croatian was their mother tongue. This clearly demonstrates that a significant number of national minorities consider Croatian to be their mother tongue. The numbers between Italians and Slovenians responded to the percentage that spoke those languages at home and considered them to be their mother tongue. According to these figures the point Krpina made corresponded to the situation among the population.

The argument that there is no reason for the Serbian minority to use their language is not grounded in anything but fear of the radical other and a lack of a constructed continuity between the behaviour of the Serbian community in Croatia in the past and present. What the discourse does then achieve is a reconstruction of the Serbian radical otherness. If the Serbs 'naturally' blend in with the rest of the population and are primarily regarded as citizens of Croatia, rather than Serbian nationals, in that case it is not possible to speak of the radical otherness as being incompatible with the Western, democratic, civilised Croatian identity. The discourse of the opposition then becomes weak and contradicts itself given the impossibility of the coexistence of the radical other and the naturalised Serbian population in Croatia. Their articulation of the relationship between the Croatian majority and the Serbian minority demonstrates how contingent factors have discursively been brought together and constructed the Serbian minority as an extension of the Serbian radical other as well as a link to the hegemonic powers of the past.

The official discourse did not engage fully with the opposition's constructions of the self and the other but promoted a Western European understanding of minority protection and the meaning of a civil state. Failing to address the Tuđmanist discourse on minorities and the Serbian minority in particular in more depth made it difficult to advocate new understandings and policies without appearing anti-Croatian and non-patriotic.

6.7 Concluding remarks

The relations between Croatia and the EU and Croatia and the Balkan countries dramatically changed in the period of post elections in 2000. Given the positive feedback from the EU and other international actors Croatia adopted a role of being the generator and an example of positive political change in the region. In doing so, it stressed the importance of having good neighbourly relations but insisted on keeping boundaries between itself and the Balkan other.

This case study starts by examining the rearticulation of the concept of national minority. Just like the previous case study, the minority question is rooted in the civilizational discourse that provides a background for the understanding of the question, as well as an ethical element to the case. In the case of minority rights we have encountered Serbia as an internal other. Thus, the question of minority rights is closely tied to the nature of Croatia's relations with Serbia given that the most numerous minority were the Serbs. Negotiating the solutions to the problem of Serbian minority presented the new regime with a difficult task of reconstructing their own political identity that would include all Croatian citizens, regardless of their nationality. Like in the case of cooperating with the ICTY, discussing the way the Croatian state is defined in the Constitution allowed for a clarification about the status of its citizens. Subject positions of Croatian 'victim' and Serbian 'aggressor' could change in that new context and allow for a new interpretation that abandons the old construction of the Serbian radical other in favour of a moderate, more acceptable otherness.

The analysis of the minority rights question reveals that the discourse of victimization was crucial for the discursive change and the status of the Serbian minority in Croatia. Discourse of victimization was also closely linked to the discourse of responsibility and required of the Croatian state to treat all its citizens in the same way, and in doing so to demonstrate its democratic maturity. It is here that once again we see how closely connected the minority rights question was to the problem of cooperating with the ICTY, since in both case studies we find the same discourse and very similar patterns of its reconstruction.

The following chapter will summarise the findings of the empirical analysis and relate them to the theoretical questions introduced in the introductory chapter of the thesis.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has set out to explore the transformation of Croatian identity after the parliamentary and presidential election in the year 2000, within the wider framework of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and minority rights protection. During the period of the 1990s Croatia experienced significant changes on both the international and domestic levels. At the end of the decade it found itself in difficult circumstances with challenges from the international community and what was perceived to be the increasingly isolationist politics of President Tuđman and his followers. The change of direction after the election signified not just a shift on the political level but also an opportunity for Croatia to fully develop its Western European identity and take on norms of democratisation as defined by the European Union and other international institutions.

The argument put forward in the thesis is that the identity of a political actor is crucial for a deeper understanding of political events. Examining political changes from a poststructuralist perspective offers an explanation of the way policy and identity are mutually constitutive, through examining how identity is discursively constructed within a particular social and political context. The thesis argues that Croatian understanding of what it means to be a Western European country was crucial for the development of a number of political issues that had to be addressed at the time. The study looks at the way the West and the East were discursively constructed and how these articulations were related to the reconstruction of Croatian identity from its journey from the Balkans towards the European Union. The focus of the study is the relationship between the Croatian subject and a range of its others, and the way that a radical other becomes discursively reconstructed towards a less radical other, and the implications that change has for the identity of the studied subject.

The analysis uses two case studies in order to examine the questions of cooperation with the ICTY and minority protection. Both case studies are rooted in a basic discourse imbedded in the problem of identity, called the 'civilisational discourse'. It was identified as an overarching discourse which underpinned the way discourses around the ICTY and minority protection developed. The analysis of discourses surrounding cooperation with the ICTY and the status and protection of ethnic minorities that serve as a framework for the study of Croatian identity, demonstrates that an interpretive study that focuses on the domestic context is necessary to add to the existing knowledge about Croatia, as well as to further development in theorising identity in the International Relations field.

The study uses a discourse analytical method of analysis in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena. It involved studying primary texts, looking for discourses surrounding the topics of analysis and relationships between them. In doing so the study revealed the interconnectedness of the texts and the wider social setting and the close relationship between language and the context within which it exists. The study has confirmed the importance of context specific factors, which in this case is the Croatian domestic sphere whose particularities have proved crucial for the development of relations with the European Union and adoption of its norms and principles.

This concluding chapter aims to synthesise the findings of the previous chapters and discuss their implications for poststructuralist theorising about identity, as well as for Croatia and its development. Section 7.2 revisits poststructuralist theory and discusses its strengths for a study of this type, and discusses the contribution of this thesis to its further development in the area of studying identity. Section 7.3 will discuss the contribution of the thesis to other fields of study, and 7.4 will briefly discuss future work and possible directions of research.

7.2 Revisiting poststructuralist theory and the contribution of the thesis

In order to analyse the reconstruction of Croatian identity during a period of significant political change that deeply affected Croatian society, this thesis employed a poststructuralist framework and a discourse analytical method of analysis. Poststructuralism rejects the distinction between ideational and material, discursive and non-discursive, behavioural and linguistic in the social practice and suggests that all 'things' gain meaning in discourse and that every discursive structure has a material character. This approach does not question the reality of objects and whether they exist or not, but is focused on meaning of the objects under study. In this way discourses include all social and political practice, not just language in its most literal form.

One of the greatest strengths of poststructuralist approaches is the focus on language and the way meaning is produced and its ability to theorise the nature of interests and identities. In doing so it departs from traditional approaches that assume that identities and interests are exogenously given.

The poststructuralist focus is not simply on the relationship between actors who interact and negotiate and seek to win in a given situation, but rather on the way that an actor comes into being and develops further, or in other words, how its identity is shaped through these processes of interaction with other actors. This makes it possible to understand how the meaning of concepts tied to the actor's identity changes and what the implications of that change are for political decisions. For this reason it was crucial for this study to look into the discourses that surrounded Croatia's attempts at Westernisation and de-Balkanisation, so defined by the political elites of the time, and how it defined its own identity in the process. In concrete policy terms its understanding of democracy was changed and as a consequence it reflected in the political practice on several levels, in the question of cooperation with The Hague tribunal as well as in relation to the minority question.

The works of Lene Hansen, David Campbell, Ole Waever, Iver Neumann, Michael Shapiro, Michelle Pace and Bahar Rumelili on identity have been a valuable contribution to poststructuralist thinking. Their theorising on identity and the process

of othering allows us to apply poststructuralist approaches to a variety of case studies and to analyse the process of political change through complex relationships between actors. This study fits within their work and uses their approaches and their findings in order to pursue a similar topic. Equally, this study has questioned some of the problems and drawbacks found in these authors' studies, and through its findings adds to the existing literature and thinking about identity and politics.

7.2.1 The findings on Croatia and theoretical implications of empirical analysis

The three data analysis chapters have been structured around several themes. Chapter four discusses a civilizational discourse that has been identified as a discourse that underpins much, if not all, of Croatian political discussion. The civilizational discourse positions the East against the West in terms of the Balkans and the European Union, which are discursively constructed to embody the two civilisations. Croatia's aim is to clearly define where it belongs and based on that to pursue its goal of becoming an EU member in the near future. The main problem in Croatia's geo-political situation is that is considered to be a Balkan country by the Western world, which carries a set of negative connotations and a particular identity, as it becomes apparent from a study of Western discourses on the Balkans. The following two chapters that address case studies of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and minority rights protection demonstrate how the process of de-Balkanising Croatia's image is played out within these two areas of policymaking, and how Croatian identity is discursively reconstructed.

The Balkans are central to the discourse on Croatian identity. They are presented as a geographical, civilizational and political space. However, taking a closer look reveals that there is a difficulty in establishing where that space actually is. Borders are vaguely defined and that definition always depends on who speaks.

This problem of vague definition is present throughout the analysis and further demonstrates the problem of linking identity to a particular space.

In Croatian discourse, Croatia is placed on the border of the Balkans but unjustly coupled with it. In order to escape such a placement and to deal with the problem of being positioned within that geographical and political space, Croatia defines itself as being placed in-between civilisations, between the East and the West. Although the solution seemed like a convenient one for the time being, it did not solve Croatia's problem of not having a clearly defined identity that was linked to a particular geographical and civilizational space. The analysis reveals that the East and the West are discursively constructed as the opposite ends of the identity spectrum and as such are mutually exclusive. While the West is constructed as progressive, democratic and peaceful, the Balkans are backward, undemocratic and violent. Additionally, we find that the Balkans are perceived to have a stable identity, which is not capable of change and becoming more Western. The Balkans are thus perceived as a threat and as a consequence Croatia's identity as a Western country in the making is threatened as well.

The Balkans are even more specifically defined and placed in relation to Serbia, which functions as the local embodiment of the Balkans. Serbia stands as the opposite of Croatia and functions as its mirror image. Because of the recent war, Croatia constantly reproduces the discourse of the Balkan/Serbian threat, in order to secure its identity as being essentially different and thus Western European. However, a paradox becomes evident in this situation. As long as Croatia is trying to free itself from the Balkans and the Balkan image, it is at this very point that the discourse of hostility and antagonism is reproduced that actually reinforces its Balkan identity. As long as it is locked in this paradox Croatia cannot fully attain Western identity that stresses cooperation and peaceful coexistence with its neighbours.

This feature found in the study confirms the poststructuralist assumption that an other is necessary for the discursive construction of identity, as an entity against which the subject identifies. Croatia defines itself as being completely opposite to the Balkans and Serbia and its identity as such depends on the very existence of such a

radical other. However, what is not adequately addressed in poststructuralist thinking is the possibility of change within this relationship with a radical other. The following discussion of cooperation with the ICTY and minority protection will reveal what the potential for that is when the identity of one actor begins to change.

As discussed in chapter three, the principle of mutual constituitivness is clearly evident here, where the construction of the other has an effect on the construction of the identity of the self. By reproducing certain discourses about the Balkans and Serbia, Croatia is tying these discourses to the reconstruction of its own identity, where it requires particular discursive constructions of the other to itself. It is here that we can learn more about Croatia's particular identity constructs, as well as learn something about the process on a more general level. When engaging in a study of identity of this kind it is useful to follow the process of discursive construction of identity and to keep a close eye on the details. That includes the way things are articulated, the context and the changes to the context within which given discourses operate, the nodal points and their role in the discourse, and the way self and other relate to one another. Given the nature of poststructuralist work, we can never claim to know the fullness of an actor's identity, but rather we can seek to learn about the process of its identity construction, and be able to pinpoint developments in the process over time.

For example, this principle is evident in the way the otherness of the Serbian minority in Croatia was discursively constructed. From being identified as aggressor and enemy of the Croatian people, the Serbian minority gradually achieved the identity of victim and on those grounds became closer to Croatian identity. The Homeland War worked as a powerful signifier in the official Croatian discourse and determined how discourses of victimisation, responsibility and Westernisation developed. By studying closely discourses on the Serbian minority and the gradual reconstruction of their identity we can also learn something about Croatia: its fears concerning its neighbours in the region, motives behind cooperation and the way it is trying to fix its identity as a Western European country, among others.

Examining the case of cooperation with the ICTY reveals a discourse that depended on a very important signifier: sovereignty. Sovereignty underwent a radical

change of meaning. It used to be at the centre of Croatian statehood discourse and of its independence and quickly became embedded in the construction of Croatian identity. This required a radical reconstruction of its meaning if changes were to take place. With the new regime, sovereignty started to assume a new meaning but still retained a central position in the discourse of cooperation and democratisation, and so it remained central to the discursive construction of Croatian identity. The new understanding suggested that sovereignty is primarily about a state being willing to cooperate with other states and international institutions and to make sacrifices for the greater good. In this, cooperation with the ICTY, which was a difficult and controversial question at the time as the analysis reveals, could be justified and even presented as a positive development. This cooperation with the ICTY was presented as something that depended on whether Croatia was Western or Balkan.

At this point the political space of the Balkans was discursively connected to the temporal element. There were several aspects of this move that were closely connected during the process. First, a dichotomy between the Croatian past and present was set up, and second, the past was discursively linked to the civilizational aspect of the Balkans. The new regime articulated a division between the actors who were keeping Croatia at the Balkans, and those who were seen as leading it forward, towards EU membership. The previous regime was linked to the Balkans on the basis of their political practice. It was presented as being backward and undemocratic, which was based on their unwillingness to cooperate with international institutions. The ten years of Franjo Tuđman being in the office were discursively linked to the so-called "Balkan period" of the forty-five years spent in the Yugoslav federation. This was not openly stated but only implied through the use of coded language that would not put the new government in a difficult situation.

Cooperation with the ICTY demanded a new interpretation of what it means to be a Western European country and a mature democracy, which was quite different from the old Tuđmanist discourse. This division between the two forces demonstrates an ethical as well as temporal dimension of identity construction, where 'going back to the Balkans' is at the same time a temporal feature of going

back to ‘backward ways’, as well as an ethical one that implies inferiority of such a move.

The ICTY cooperation question resulted in another set of oppositional relationships that were created. On the one side there were the ‘legitimate defenders’ of the Homeland War and on the other there were the ‘war criminals’. In the new official discourse the war criminals were constructed as having put shame on the war that was a defining feature of contemporary Croatia and its identity, so the questioning of the nature of the Homeland War seemed to question the very essence of the Croatian identity of its citizens. As a consequence the old constructions of Croatian victims of the war and the Serbian aggressor were to be reconstructed as well, in order to fit with the new articulations.

These developments were further discursively legitimised through the civilizational discourse of Western cooperation and justice. The validity of ICTY was articulated primarily through the necessity to cooperate with the tribunal because that was interpreted as a European way of acting. Furthermore, it showed the democratic maturity to voluntarily accept the standards of international justice. The question of cooperation was turned into that of liberation from internal corruption and dishonesty that damaged the status of the war and its meaning for the Croatian people.

It is here that we encounter the repetition of the Western discourse of inherent compatibility between democracy and freedom and the Western world, and subsequently them being opposed to the perceived inherent incompatibility between the Balkans and those values. This discursive construct led to a further identification of ICTY of being good in itself because of its promotion of the norms of justice on the international scale and because that feature could help Croatia purge the Homeland war from all negative connotations.

Another interesting feature developed at that point that concerned the individualisation of guilt and responsibility for unlawful behaviour during the war. The distinction and understanding that individuals were to be put on trial, rather than the whole country, was soon discursively developed and widely accepted. The President, for example, spoke of ‘those actors’ who worked against the Constitution

and broke the law. By doing so the new regime discursively shaped its identity as being law-abiding and honest. Their discourse invoked the signifiers of the Western civilisation, linked in the cooperation-democracy-justice chain. It was this step that further helped legitimise the developing Western identity of Croatia.

It is visible from these developments that they carried a highly ethical dimension. Temporal and spatial components are complemented by the question of ethics, and thus they reveal how deeply interconnected they were at the time. We can conclude that the three components always co-exist to a certain degree, depending on the case in question. Furthermore, this confirms the hypothesis that the political space in the Croatian case primarily depends on the question of ethics, most clearly revealed in the civilizational discourse discussed earlier.

This discursive shift was present in the discourse on minority rights as well. One of the crucial features is that the Serbian element here became an internal feature, unlike in the previous case where Serbia was external to Croatia. This situation brought the Balkans within Croatia and the official discourse presented it as endangering its civilizational status as an (aspiring) Western European country. In this way, minorities immediately assumed the role of an other and were discursively constructed as being different from Croatian nationals, and as a consequence a potential threat to the society and the state. Also, the Serbs formed the most numerous national minority group and were linked to Milošević and the Serbian expansionist politics of the early 1990s.

The minority rights question witnessed a development of several discourses. The immediate concern of the political elites was a number of parliamentary debates about the Constitution and the advantages of defining Croatia as a civil state, as we found in the ICTY cooperation discourse as well. Supporters of the civil state discourse stressed its flexibility in accommodating a multi-ethnic community, as were seen in a number of EU member states. However, the official discourse presented the EU policy towards minorities to be a unified approach. They neglected to discuss the facts about different approaches to the subject. This reveals their selective identification with ‘the West’ and its democratic practices. Just like in the

case of cooperation with the ICTY, particular construction of the EU and the West are promoted, as a unified entity whose internal differences are not relevant.

Another interesting discourse that emerged regarding minorities was the case of Istria, a region with a relatively high percentage of Italian population. The case of Istria is interesting because it is very different from other regions and other minorities. Their articulation of their identity was at the time quite sophisticated and multi-layered. Their discourse was more in tune with that of the majority of EU member states on the question of national minorities. The Istrian population apparently offered a Western element to Croatia and made it easier to identify itself as already Western European. The Italians in Istria were thus not a radical other but an other closer to the Croatian subject and they held the identity Croatia wanted to attain. However, the focus on Istria did not last and the debate on minorities very quickly turned away from discussing general principles, to the very specific case of the Serbian minority and their status in the country. This reveals that the question was indeed problematic because it was the Serbs who made up the most numerous minority group, rather than it being the question of minorities on a more general level. This is quite telling about the role the Serbs had in the creation of Croatian identity and again, how they were discursively constructed. Another interesting thing about the Istrian case was the relationship between the concepts of nationalism and that of the state. A new discourse emerged that separated the idea of one homogenous nation from that of a state and in doing so followed a trend compatible with a number of EU member states.

Another discourse, familiar from the previous analysis, is the belief that Croatia should work as a factor of stabilisation in the region and that it should work as a promoter of democracy. The question of national minorities and their status brought an additional layer of meaning to the complex relationship between Croatia and its neighbours. Because the Serbs were constructed as a radical other their presence in Croatia challenged Croatian identity as a ‘Western European country’ in two ways. Serbs were not Western people but belonged to the Balkan civilisation, and their identification with the Serbian aggressor made it impossible to include them within the Croatian state as equal to the rest of the population. The Serbs thus

remained in the position of the radical other and occupied a marginal space within the discursive structures on Croatia, while at the same time it grew increasingly obvious that their identity was becoming less stable and that a change was necessary.

Finally, the minority question generated another discourse that leads us back to the ICTY cooperation case. It was the 'victim' – 'aggressor' relationship that was discursively rearticulated in this context as well. The same pattern was found in this case study. The discursive change was based on the readiness to assume responsibility and a more critical attitude towards Croatia's recent past and actions. Accepting responsibility for war crimes against Serbian civilians in Croatia, allowed for the reconstruction of the discourse about the Serbian minority and more particularly, on their identity as a radical other. During the 1990s the official discourse explicitly linked Serbia's role in the Homeland War and Serbian national minority in Croatia. The Serbs thus functioned as a radical other that was an external and an internal threat to Croatian safety and stability. Preserving the subject position of 'Croatia-victim' depended on the radical otherness of Serbia and its apparent inability to change. Just like in the ICTY case, the stability of this discourse and of the subject positions depended on the willingness to either generalise responsibility in the war, or to individualise it. While 'Serbia-aggressor' was perceived to have no redeeming qualities and thus should not be treated with sympathies according to the official discourse, it was agreed that 'Serbia-victim' possesses a high degree of humanity within the discursive construction and so presents an acceptable, less threatening other. Acknowledging common suffering and status of victims allowed the Serbian minority to become something else than a threatening other and extension of the Serbian aggressor from the previous decade. This articulation of justice mirrors the one of responsibility towards justice in the case of ICTY, and the need to distinguish between the legitimate defenders of the Homeland War and the war criminals. The radical other thus assumes an aspect of the identity of the subject. The Serbs that have suffered in the war and who were innocent were constructed as human beings and individuals. They also shared the identity of Croatian citizens, obvious in the discourse surrounding the Constitution. Understanding their rights in this way was seen as a Western and a European feature and a sign of Croatia's democratic maturity, as well as a means of bridge-building in the region and in the

country. Furthermore, it was argued that the state had a moral obligation to take care of all its citizens who required help. We see that the discourse on ethics was crucial here, and that it was linked with the temporal element of othering.

The following section will address the theoretical findings that were gathered from the above discussion on the case study. The theory employed in the thesis was based on a number of works discussed in chapter two and the following discussion will build upon the existing knowledge and suggest some further avenues for theorising and empirical research.

Theoretical findings

The above study has led to several theoretical insights concerning the poststructuralist approach and the study of identity. There are also several poststructuralist assumptions about identity that have been confirmed in this study that need to be stressed before proceeding on to discuss new findings. First, identity is not stable. Changes in the Croatian discourse bear witness to this as the country progresses from one point towards the other in its journey of redefining its identity.

There is an active role played by politicians, diplomats and other players on the domestic scene that contribute to the development of an identity, but their conscious efforts cannot be separated from a number of processes of socialisation these actors are engaged in, as well as a wider discursive sphere in which the actors operate. All contribute in their particular ways to a transformation of identity in a particular context and show its complexity. The interplay of these elements allows for new transfigurations, given that it is not possible to maintain a discourse once they start changing. New situations and new discursive constructions open up avenues for changing other features in this web of relations, and so they confirm the poststructuralist principle of mutual constituency, discussed in chapter two.

Another poststructuralist principle that was confirmed in this study is that an other plays an active role in identity construction of the subject that is being studied.

In the Croatian case we see an other – Serbia, which embodies what Croatia does not want to be, according to the official government discourse, and an identity that it perceives to be contrary to its own. An other serves a purpose to establish a series of points where the subjects differs and establishes its own parameters of how it defines itself, and where those boundaries are. As discussed previously, analysis of identity tends to consider an other to be a radical other: an actor that possesses an identity radically different and impossible to reconcile to that one that the subject of analysis holds about itself. In the Croatian case, Serbia is a perfect example of a radical other that is on the opposite side of identity spectrum from Croatia and is considered to be incapable of change for a variety of reasons. What this study confirms is a principle outlined by Lene Hansen, that an other does not necessarily have to be a radical one, and that in a study of identity we are likely to encounter a whole range of otherness.

This last point rests on the assumption that it is not possible to single out one set of relationships and analyse them as the only factor that plays a part in identity construction. Looking more critically into a subject matter reveals that the possibilities are endless in terms of the number of factors to be taken into consideration when studying identity and that the researcher needs to establish boundaries of what should and can be included into a research project. This study started as an analysis of Croatian identity change within the framework of the European Union where the number of others was not determined in advance. I argue that this kind of approach has strength because the analysis was built on empirical findings, rather than a set of preconceived notions on how the process of othering takes place.

Analysing a wider network of relationships and a number of discourses, it is likely that we will find several others who hold different degrees of otherness and have different roles to play when it comes to identity of our subject of analysis. It is necessary to be careful when looking at these articulations in order to recognise otherness in a different guise. In the Croatian case two non-radical others have been identified: the European Union and Croatia's past.

The European Union serves as a wider venue for analysing identity change in Croatia because the cooperation with the ICTY and minority rights protection fall

under the EU requirements for accession. The analysis demonstrated that in the Croatian case the EU plays a role of both a political space where Croatia wants to belong, and a model of political life that Croatia wants to follow and eventually achieve. I argue that the EU functions a kind of aspirational identity in this context and so it does not present a typical other given that identification is positive. Our subject does not define itself against the other, but identifies with it regardless of a number of differences in their identities. This allows the aspirational identity to keep the transformation on track in the desired direction and to feature as a role model throughout the process of identity change.

The second non-radical other that was identified in this study is Croatia's past. Analysis has demonstrated that the process of identity change is a deeply reflexive process during which an actor clarifies which features are important for its identity and reacts accordingly. It requires a detailed look within, and in a case of a political actor we can identity this reflexive process as examining one's actions and interaction with the international community. The poststructuralist principle of socialisation as essential for identity construction should be stressed at this point. Given that social and political actors do not have an essence, it is through social and political action and interaction through other actors that they learn about themselves and become capable of assessing questions that are relevant for their existence.

The point made previously was that an actor can look to its future and identify where it wants to be and what it wants to be like. For Croatia it was the European Union. An actor can also look into its past and determine how the past fits with the plans for the future and with the reality of the present moment. Both looking at the past and the future have a strong normative dimension to it and encompass both temporal and ethical features of identity construction. In the Croatian case the result of critically assessing its past was negative in that it was deemed incompatible with its present stage of identity construction, as well as with the future. The result of this incompatibility was a split in the subject's identity, which then became divided into two distinct elements: the past and the present. The past was tied to the radical other of the Balkans and Serbia in the Croatian case, while the present and future were discursively connected to the West and the European Union.

The analysis suggests that reconstructing the meaning of the past and its role in the discourses concerning identity was required in order to maintain a unity of the discourse of development and progress that was crucial for reaching the desired goal. This finding demonstrates that it is impossible for an actor to hold conflicting identities when a strong normative element underpins the identity development. In other words, Croatia could not at the same time hold on to the meaning of the Homeland war as defined by the previous regime, and aspire to become an EU member, faithful to their discursive constructs.

The othering of the past revolved around a change of meaning of a signifier crucial for Croatian identity: sovereignty. Reconstructing the meaning of important signifiers allows an actor to begin a change within the entire discourse, given that all signifiers are connected and revolve around a nodal point. From this follows that a change in one element influences all other elements that are linked to it to a certain degree. By establishing a web of relations and identifying signifiers and nodal points and their role in the creation of meaning, we can trace changes in discourses and how they affect other discourses. When the Croatian past is identified as being Balkan, it follows from this that it is necessary for signifiers that revolve around the nodal point of civilisation to assume new meanings. In this way sovereignty underwent radical discursive change and allowed for a new articulation of important political questions, and equally, for a new stage of identity change to begin.

Another relevant finding that emerged from this study is that a radical other has the capacity to change into a non-radical other under certain conditions. This finding contributes to our understanding of the othering process, as well as to the understanding that identity tends to be unstable, despite seemingly sedimented discourses. The Croatian case has shown that there is a link between the identity of the subject that is studied and its others. Following from the previous point that a change in one segment influences other segments to a certain degree, it is logical that the way that identity undergoes a change influences the construction of the other. In this study the Serbian radical other follows the discursive change within the Croatian identity discourse and slowly starts occupying a position closer to the one of Croatia. As the analysis shows, it is a slow and difficult process where a number of

conflicting discourses tend to arise and instabilities in discourse become more apparent. Change became possible when the radical other assumed a feature that made it possible to relate to the Croatian subject. In this case it was the suffering of innocent civilians in the war. This discourse of suffering was found in both the ICTY and minority protection case studies and it was articulated in very similar ways. This suggests that when a radical other is beginning to be defined in positive terms, it is when the possibility of lessening of its negative identity starts to develop. Again, this is closely connected to the normative aspect of identity building.

Looking closely at the process we can see that we are not encountering a one-way process, but that the actors constitute each other. The changed identity of the previously radical other gains the capacity to interact with the subject of analysis in a new way. In this case, acknowledging an aspect of Serbia to be close to Croatia through common suffering of innocent people, allows Serbia to speak with a new voice. This new aspect of Serbia's identity further strengthens the new relationship, as well as the developing identity of Croatia, that included cooperation and a growing positive attitude to its neighbours in the Balkans. Also,

As I mentioned earlier, certain requirements have to be met in order for a change of this type to happen. If there is no external input that will help a new discourse to develop, there must be an internal struggle that will generate the same development. In this study the European Union provided a framework that required specific norms to be accepted by the aspiring member state. Since the EU was perceived as a positive role model for Croatia to follow, its requirements were considered to be reasonable and justifiable to a certain degree. Adjustment was far from easy and the official discourse had to battle opposing discourses that seek to challenge new requirements from abroad. However, we can claim with a degree of certainty that when a discourse that is perceived to be superior and positive enters into the domestic sphere, it helps mobilise actors to engage with it more closely and to work towards a normalisation of the new discursive constructions.

This thesis has demonstrated the complexity of the othering process by examining two cases of othering where the other is constructed in a negative way. The othering of its own identity proved to be interesting because it did not engage

with a radical other, such as we normally encounter when studying foreign policy. This internal othering brought the subject of analysis into a new position. We can define it as the splitting of the subject's identity into two along both the temporal and ethical axis. The process is similar to that of external othering except that it is more reflexive and less exclusive. For example, the othering of the Balkans is always expressed in very negative terms and it is very clear on the construction of the Balkans and its position in Europe. The othering of the past, on the other hand, is a more sensitive issue and demands a different tone and different imagery. While the Balkans are dangerous to the whole state at a political and civilisational level, the past is a more personal issue because it affects people on a more local level and therefore can never be completely rejected. The language used is quite different as well. While the othering of the Balkans is done in explicit terms, the othering of the past requires a certain degree of anonymity and uses codes such as 'those people'. The civilisational discourse is present in this process as well and provides a basis for the discursive change.

7.3 Concluding remarks and future research

This study shows how new circumstances enabled alternative discursive configurations of Croatia and offered a possibility to rearticulate the meaning of concepts that were fundamental to its identity through the process of cooperation with the ICTY and its reconstruction of the minority rights protection norm. Signifiers 'democracy', 'sovereignty', 'responsibility', 'justice' and 'rights' underwent a radical transformation through discursive rearticulations around the nodal point of the 'western civilisation'. The argument put forward in the study claims that the concept of the western civilisation that is embodied in the European Union in the Croatian official discourse was of fundamental importance for all

political developments in the immediate post-Tuđman period, and that it was a crucial element for Croatian identity reconstruction in the same period.

The two case studies provided interesting and fruitful material and demonstrated the relevance of poststructuralist research in the field. The method of discourse analysis used in this thesis allowed me to closely look into the text and to relate it to the wider sphere of Croatian social and political context. My findings both strengthen the poststructuralist approach by confirming its applicability and relevance, and raise a few questions with theoretical implications, as discussed in the previous section.

The data that I collected for this study has not been exhausted and offers more material to be studied in the future. The results of this work provide a solid foundation for further work on Croatia and its relationship with the European Union, as well as its Balkan neighbourhood. Also, several points have emerged during the analysis that are worth looking into and developing further.

A feature that is relevant for the process of identity change is the process of temporal othering. In this study temporal othering of Croatian identity was one of the findings during the analysis of cooperation with the ICTY and of Tuđman's legacy. The study has contributed to the theorising of temporal othering and the empirical work of Thomas Diez, Iver Neumann and Ole Waever. A more detailed focus on this phenomenon would increase existing knowledge of the question. An entire study on temporal othering in Croatia could be built on the foundations that this thesis offers at the moment.

Second, more can be done in further studying processes of othering in the context of aspirational identity. This feature has been revealed in this study in the relationship between Croatia and the European Union. Looking more closely into this relationship and analysing it over a longer period of time would provide useful insight into the nature of such a positive process of othering. Such a study would greatly contribute to poststructuralist work that places identity at its centre and would provide a deeper understanding of the process in different contexts.

Finally, this study could be deepened by looking at Serbian discourses on the Balkans, Croatia and the role of the European Union in its own development. This

study has focused on the Croatian discourse and did not consider the Serbian side. Examining the Serbian discourse would shed more light on the developments of relations between the two countries over time and would enrich the existing findings.

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